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ABSTRACT

Subtitled "Five Case Studies and Three Snapshots," this book illustrates what occurs in measurable terms when participants in the schooling process work cooperatively to improve school climate. In addition, the activities that are described reflect how to achieve the climate objectives of the schooling process--satisfaction and productivity. The first five chapters are case studies of successful school climate improvement efforts. Chapter six, "Three Snapshots," contains briefer descriptions of school climate improvement efforts, and chapter seven summarizes the implications of the case studies. Common threads running through all the projects are the following: (1) involvement supplemented top-down governance structures; (2) staff development was linked to specific school improvement efforts; (3) efforts were frequently measured and reported; (4) leaders shared excitement and positive enthusiasm; and (5) missions or goals were clearly articulated. The leaders of the case study schools shared a common process that included: (1) forming a management team; (2) collecting base-line data; (3) raising staff's, students' and parents' level of awareness; (4) assessing and prioritizing; (5) forming and managing a task force; and (6) doing a summative evaluation. Tables and figures distributed throughout the chapters provide background material; five appendixes conclude the book. (MLF)

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SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT:

LEADERSHIP AND PROCESS

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SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT:

LEADERSHIP AND PROCESS

EUGENE HOWARD

SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT:
LEADERSHIP AND PROCESS

FIVE CASE STUDIES AND THREE SNAPSHOTS

by

Eugene R. Howard

A CADRE publication

INTRODUCTION

FIVE CASE STUDIES was developed as a portion of a three part publication sequence that includes assessment, analysis and application. The first effort to effect a national awareness of the membership's concept of School Climate was accomplished in 1973 with "School Climate Improvement," a book that synthesized the broad definitions of climate and included a measurement process. This was followed by numerous "how to" publications.

All of these books in one way or another related experiences or theories of consultants and practitioners, the "movers and doers" of the school climate concept. However, assessing school climate and sharing ideas are basically academic exercises unless put to the test or until they are ultimately reflected in the practices of a school population. Consequently, it appeared only appropriate that the third focus of our publications efforts would dwell on the evidences of school climate implementation and that Gene Howard, a long time proponent of improved climate, would be principal investigator.

FIVE CASE STUDIES is useful in several ways. First, it illustrates what occurs in measurable terms when participants in the schooling process work cooperatively; second, the activities that are described reflect how to achieve the climate objectives of the schooling process, satisfaction and productivity; and finally, at least for some readers, the description of successful efforts will provide some opportunities of reflection back to 1969, the initiation of the CFK efforts and the comradery of those many meetings and deliberations....the germination of ideas that are now reflected herein by another generation of proponents of school climate.

Bruce Howell
Coordinator of Publications
Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1985

ABOUT CADRE

CADRE is a small professional organization made up of 300 educators from public schools, private schools, and universities. CADRE's goal is to encourage, through creative interaction, the professional growth of its members and the improvement of the climate for learning in America's schools. Much of CADRE's thrust is to insure the continuation and further development of the concepts and goals of the Denver based philanthropic foundation, CFK, Ltd. (1967-1974). During its seven years of operation this foundation developed approaches to improving planning processes for school improvement, administrator renewal programs, and school climate improvement.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eugene Howard first became interested in school climate when, as principal of the highly innovative Ridgewood High School, in suburban Chicago, he noticed that, "Something was missing."

"Ridgewood," says Gene, "was a school that presumably had it all---learning laboratories, individualized instruction, seminar classes, team teaching, independent study, flexible scheduling, multi-media large group instruction, interdisciplinary courses and units---all of the organizational innovations which can make excellence possible."

What Gene thought was missing, however, was a positive climate from the point of view of the students.

Since the mid-60's, Gene's professional life has been focused on a quest for educational excellence. His key question: "What would a school be like if it were designed to serve the people in it?"

His quest gained momentum when he joined the staff of the Kettering Foundation, where he worked with Charles Kettering II, John Goodlad, and B. Frank Brown to establish the Institute for the Development of Educational Activities (IDEA). When Charles Kettering established his own private foundation, CFK Ltd., Gene became an associate and a frequent contributor to the organization's conferences, publications, and projects.

It was primarily through this association with CFK Ltd., that Gene was able to pursue his quest for a definition of a positive school climate.

As the climate concept matured, Gene and several other associates applied the ideas to real school situations.

In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Gene conceptualized and built a new laboratory school for Nova University, a school which he describes today as "Summerhill with an open curriculum." Later, as Associate Superintendent for Instruction in San Francisco, he was able to apply climate improvement concepts to a large school system which was undergoing court-ordered desegregation. The result was the launching of one school project a week during the time he was there.

As Superintendent of Schools in Urbana, Illinois, Gene improved the district's organizational climate by flattening the heirarchy, opening communications, developing formal structures for participatory decision-making and planning, and encouraging the implementation of new ideas. As in San Francisco, innovation flourished.

Now in Colorado, Gene works with the State Department of Education, helping department staff members conceptualize new ideas. In Colorado he has assisted hundreds of school leaders with projects to improve their schools. His pervasive interest in school climate has earned him the informal title of "Mr. Climate."

Gene has been active in CADRE since it was organized in 1974, serving on its board of directors and making presentations at its conferences.

He has written two books, both published by Parker Publishing, a subsidiary of Prentice Hall. How School Administrators Make Things Happen, co-authored with Dr. Edward Brainard, summarizes what was learned from CFK Ltd's projects to enhance educational leadership and systematic planning. His School Discipline Desk Book, describes in detail how improving a school's climate can make traditional approaches to discipline obsolete.

Gene lives quietly in Denver with his wife, Virginia and their daughter, Patricia, who aspires to be a teacher. A self-proclaimed workaholic, he spends most of his weekends studying, writing, and preparing for speaking and consulting assignments.

When asked what he most enjoys doing, he replies, "I like to take a complex idea, simplify it, and help people apply it." He sees himself as "one of many people who are attempting to bridge the gap between research and practice."

This book, School Climate Improvement: Leadership and Process, is his latest attempt at bridge-building.

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CHAPTER I

BUILDING EXCELLENCE IN LOMPOC
A CALIFORNIA PRINCIPAL TELLS HIS STORY

How long does it take to create an excellent school? According to Hank Gallina, Principal of El Camino Elementary School in Lompoc, California, it can be done in seven years. At least that's how long Hank and his staff have been working systematically on school improvement. The results have been impressive.

Achievement, as measured by the California Test of Basic Skills, has substantially risen - even though most of the children in the school are from low-income families whose first language is not English.

More specifically, here's what happened to basic skills scores:

MEDIAN PERCENTILE SCORES		
	FROM:	TO:
Math	12th	44th
Reading	16th	38th
Language	12th	32nd

Discipline referrals to the office, once frequent, are now rare; vandalism and graffiti have almost been eliminated; and pupil absenteeism has been reduced from 40 to -10 percent. The use of obscene language by pupils, once a major problem, has almost been eliminated.

"Two summers ago," says Hank, "our school was painted. During the following two years there have been only two incidences of spray painting of the walls and in both cases the defacing was done by outsiders. In two years there have been no cases of writing on the walls by students."

Why?

"Because," says Hank, "our pupils, even those who have only been here a few months, love their school and their teachers, "And," he adds, "they are succeeding. Our programs, our materials, and our methods are tailor-made to the needs of our pupils."

When Hank became El Camino's principal seven years ago, he brought to the school a cohesive concept of what an excellent school should be. He envisioned a school in which:

- learning activities would be prescribed with due regard for a pupil's level of intellectual development - a la Piaget.
- Materials and instruction would be available in both English and Spanish
- learning would be "active" - a wide variety of hands-on, Montessori materials would be available related to each objective, and
- the curriculum would be carefully defined and sequenced so that less complex skills would be mastered before more complex skills were attempted.

A major source of these ideas had been Hank's year of study in England where he visited several British Primary Schools and where he studied the theories of Piaget and Montessori. In returning to Lompoc, Hank established a new school, the Migulito School, to translate what he had learned into practice. When that school was closed seven years ago, Hank moved to El Camino.

"The Migulito School, says Hank, taught us how to organize a school based on sound learning theory. The Migulito experience provided us with confidence that our ideas would work. It prepared us to meet the challenge of El Camino - the challenge of changing a traditional school to a modern one." It was that transition which took seven years.

El Camino's small teaching staff (16 teachers and 23 aides) greeted the new ideas with a mixture of cautious support and thinly-veiled skepticism.

"Initially," says Hank, "I had more guts than brains. When I encountered resistance to my ideas I didn't back off; we just moved ahead. I think backing off in the face of resistance shows lack of commitment. I wanted the staff to understand that I believed strongly in what I was suggesting. So we proceeded gradually with a series of inservice meetings, visitations to other schools, and one-on-one discussions about ideas, methods, and problems."

During this early period a procession of consultants provided workshops for the staff. Dr. Larry Lowery of the University of California (Berkeley), Dr. Mickey Segal, from Nova University (Florida), and Dr. Connie Kamii from the University of Illinois provided training in Piagetian theory and practice. Dr. Margaret Humphry of the St. Nicholas (Montessori) Training Center in London provided a series of workshops on Montessori teaching methods.

The school district had made available ten minimum days a year so that afternoons could be used for inservice and planning. The El Camino staff took full advantage of this opportunity by learning

specific techniques related to an overall concept of excellence. Faculty members were also encouraged to attend out-of-district conferences and workshops and to share what they learned with others on their return.

Hank and his faculty leaders used their compensatory education funds wisely and well. The link between staff development activities and school improvement goals became apparent. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that the school was developing its own unique character by blending three powerful educational concepts into a cohesive program. The school was dedicated to the ideas of Piaget, Montessori, and bi-lingualism.

Gradually the appearance of the school began to change. A large open room, formerly a library became a learning center where materials were classified and displayed in accordance with Piagetian levels of development. In the classrooms rows of chair-desks dissolved as learning teams were created and learning centers organized. Learning materials were everywhere - on shelves, tables, closets, on file cabinets, in the principals office.

The climate of the school began to change. More people were feeling a sense of dedication and satisfaction. Pupils began to smile more and to act out less.

It was at this point, after two years of progress, that Hank met several members of CADRE [1], a small but influential professional organization. From Dr. James Olivero, director of the Association of California School Administrators and from Dr. William Maynard, a

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[1] Collegial Associates for Development and Renewal of Educators

consultant from Seattle, he learned about work which had been done in measuring and improving school climate. From conversations with Dr. James Slezak, Superintendent of the Mt. Diablo, California School District he learned techniques of sharing decisions and involving staff members in systematic planning; and from Dr. M. Donald Thomas, Superintendent of Schools in Salt Lake and Francis Powell and Barbara Case from Tulsa, he learned how to organize a staff for shared governance and how to open communications among staff members. Hank concluded that it was time to take a close look at the school's climate.

He did so by using the "School Climate Profile," an instrument for diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses of climate. This instrument had been developed by a task force organized by CFK Ltd., the small private foundation of Charles F. Kettering III.

Prior to using the instrument Hank provided the El Camino staff with information regarding climate improvement and the instrument. Staff meetings were devoted to discussing the school climate concept and the importance of a positive climate as a pre-condition for excellence. The instrument was then modified slightly so that the items were more appropriate to the El Camino situation; then it was administered to the entire staff.

Hank felt some anxiety while the results were being tabulated. He realized that weaknesses as well as strengths of the school would be exposed.

"When you use the profile," says Hank, "you are really laying yourself out."

The results, however, were generally positive; "morale" and "trust," two key climate factors, were seen as strengths. "Active learning" and "support" and "structure" (for pupils) were seen as program strengths. Three process determinants, however, "communications," "Problem Solving" and "Shared Decision Making," were clearly perceived as problems. This information was shared with the staff in a meeting called for that purpose. At that meeting the staff discussed a variety of ways to improve the three problem determinants. Then, following the staff meeting, a smaller group of leaders met with Hank to develop some preliminary plans. At that meeting the group agreed by consensus that the shared governance concept which had been developed in Tulsa and Salt Lake City and the decision-making model in use at Mt. Diablo would be adapted for use in the El Camino School.

During the following year Hank and his staff leaders organized a series of workshops to train staff members in communications skills and problem solving techniques.

From Tulsa Barbara Case and Francis Powell came to show the staff how to set up a shared governance council and to teach them decision-making, problem-solving, and communications skills. Hank strongly believes in the staff development approach to school improvement. According to Hank, "staff development is a kind of insurance against failure. They can take away the money," he says, "but they can't take away what the staff has learned."

The next step was to develop a decision-making process for the school. The Mt. Diablo Decision-Making Chart (see Appendix A) was modified

to meet the El Camino staff's needs. One-hundred-and-four key decisions were defined and classified. Five questions were answered regarding each of the 104 decisions:

1. Is this decision made outside the school (e.g., by the Board of Education or by the Legislature).
2. Who, within the school has the authority to make this decision?
3. Does this individual need prior approval from anyone before making the decision? If so, whose approval is to be sought?
4. Who is to be notified of each decision? and
5. Which decisions are administrative prerogatives, not usually shared with the staff.

"This process appears complicated at first," says Hank, "but it really isn't as difficult as it seems. We completed the chart in about thirty days."

While the decision-making process was being clarified, a staff council was organized with representation from the primary teachers, intermediate teachers, the para-professionals, and the support staff. All members are elected by their constituents. Some characteristics of the council are:

1. Each member had one vote.
2. All staff members had agreed in advance that they were obligated to support the council's decisions.
3. Controversial decisions were discussed with the staff before the council decided.
4. Decisions were made by consensus -- i.e., all members, including the principal, had a veto.
5. Members voted on each issue in accordance with a scale - zero to five, as follows:

0 = Veto
1 = Strongly opposed
2 = Opposed
3 = Undecided
4 = In favor
5 = Strongly in favor

6. The staff council was not to be used as a complaint bureau. Complaints were to be handled through regular channels. Rather, it was a decision-making group involved with governance issues.

7. The council could (and occasionally did) delegate decisions to the principal. When this occurred the council agreed in advance to support the principal's decision.

Recently the staff council made some important decisions regarding the operation of the school. Some examples:

1. The learning center was reorganized so that it became more of a tutorial center and less of a materials storage center.

   - As a result, tutors began spending more time than previously working with pupils in their own classroom.

   - Teachers then found that they could refer pupils more readily to the center for special help. The referral decision, however, was the teacher's, not the tutor's.

2. The compensatory education budget of more than $250,000 was allocated by the staff council. In delegating this task to the council, Hank specified only two conditions: (1) that the compensatory education coordinator's position could not be removed and (2) that the over-all allocation could not be exceeded.

3. Decisions relating to the day-to-day management of the school included a decision to turn off the bell system ("It's too noisy and we all know what time it is") and a decision to eliminate scheduled recesses. Each teacher can now give students a recess break at a time most appropriate for his or her class.

So far, Hank is delighted with the results of the shared decision-making process. The decision a year ago, made at the Central Office -

Board of Education level to declare El Camino a Montessori magnet school was supported by the staff, even though the decision meant that some of the staff members would need additional training. Hank is predicting that the transition from a segregated school to an intergrated magnet school will be a smooth one, even though substantial compensatory aid funds will be lost. The plan called for all of the professional staff as well as at least one third of the aides to have Montessori diplomas as well as state-issued certificates. Only two teachers (of a total of 16) have requested transfers.

The CFK Ltd. Climate Profile, which has been administered for the second time, has shown that in one year the school's climate has improved significantly.

What has Hank learned from his experience at El Camino? "First of all," he says, "central office administrators' and board members' support for change of this magnitude is absolutely essential. They have to know what is happening and why. The school's improvement efforts have to be congruent with the over-all direction in which the district is moving."

Throughout the total process, Hank and his staff have benefitted from strong support from the central office and the Board of Education. The district's Superintendent, Clarence Bloom, Assistant Superintendent, Bill Williams, and Compensatory Education Coordinator, Teddy Fuller were involved in all of the major strategic decisions, they agreed in advance with the overall goals of the project. Likewise board of education members were kept well aware of the school's objectives and progress. It

was not unusual, in fact, for board members to attend some of the inservice sessions so that they understood in detail what was happening.

"We also learned," says Hank, "about the importance of a strong staff development program which clearly supported the improvement goals."

The pacing of change was carefully controlled so that the faculty was expected to change their teaching styles gradually, as the training proceeded. Teachers were given time to grow and to experiment.

Thirdly, Hank learned the importance of involving the staff in decision-making and planning processes. He does not believe that shared governance erodes the authority of the principal.

"What happens," he says, "is that the principal's power base is broadened. The principal has a previously agreed upon structure and process for gaining support for new ideas. The power base no longer rests with just the principal and a few others. The base is with the total staff.

Hank and his staff also learned about the importance of a school's climate as a pre-condition for excellence. The El Camino staff directed their improvement efforts on a variety of program and process determinants that had been defined by CFK Ltd and CADRE. Examples:

CFK Ltd., Climate Determinant	El Camino Action Plan
1. Active Learning	1. The Montessori materials and methods increased the amount of "hands on" learning substantially.
2. Individualized Performance Expectations	2. Pupils were assigned work in accordance with their levels of development (Piaget).
3. Varied Learning Environments	3. New learning spaces were designed within classrooms (e.g. learning centers) and elsewhere to accommodate the new program

CFK Ltd., Climate Determinant	El Camino Action Plan
4. Improvement of School Goals	4. A clearly communicated unifying concept was understood by all. Major decisions were made with reference to that concept.
5. Effective Communications Involvement in Decision-Making and Planning	5. Through shared governance and a formalized decision-making process staff involvement was enhanced. The result was increased cohesiveness, high morale, and a high level of trust.
6. Effective Teaching-Learning Strategies	6. Teachers were given assistance in changing their teaching styles. Their roles, their materials, their classroom organization, and their management systems.

The Lompoc School District and El Camino School leaders have demonstrated that significant school improvement is possible if the principal is able to project a clear vision of excellence to the staff, if change is supported by a carefully designed staff development program, if consistent district level support is available, and if the staff is involved in planning and decision-making.

Further, the El Camino experience has demonstrated how bridges can be built between research and practice.

We have one more example of how building research-practice bridges can result in improved learner satisfaction and achievement. "And that," says Hank Gallina, "is the bottom line."

A SEQUEL TO THE EL CAMINO STORY

Shortly after the preceding story was written, the Lompoc Board of Education found it necessary to close El Camino School. Its faculty and students were combined with the Clarence Ruth School, about two miles away, which was designated as a magnet school. Hank Gallina was named principal of the combined school.

Hank reports that the El Camino program has been successfully adopted by the Ruth School.

"We didn't lose the program," Hank says, "just because we lost our building. We just gained some new faculty members and students."

"When you build a program right," he adds, "it will survive all kinds of challenges--even the closing of the building."

The ideas pioneered at El Camino are also being adopted by other Lompoc elementary schools.

Gerald Schockmel, principal of La Canada School has developed two Montessori classrooms and is encouraging school-wide use of Montessori and bilingual materials.

The Montessori World Institute in San Luis Obispo is now training more than 40 teachers and aides. The Lompoc Board of Education is providing funds for the training, while the teachers volunteer the time necessary to complete the program.

Hank is pleased with the growing acceptance of the Montessori concept throughout the district.

"It's like a seed being planted," he says, "and being able to see it blossom into fullness."

CHAPTER II

PARENT AND STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN SUBURBIA:

Climate Improvement at Sunset Ridge Elementary School

by
Eugene R. Howard

Westminster, Colorado is a pleasant, middle-class, suburban community, similar in many respects to its hundreds of counterparts in all parts of the country. Driving through the community you see, for the most part, rows of single family homes, front and back yards, sidewalks, trees, bicycles, kids and dogs. It is a family-oriented community, a community in which parents expect - and get - a high quality of schooling for their children.

People feel proud that they live in suburbia rather than in the near city of Denver. In most cases, both parents must hold jobs in order to stay in the community. It is, then, with some sense of sacrifice that parents are involved in school improvement activities.

Sunset Ridge's principal, Mary Lou Zarlengo, doesn't like to talk about the negative state of affairs which she found when she was transferred to the school three years ago. She prefers to say positive things about her predecessor and the school.

Parents and staff leaders, however, are less reluctant. They will describe how, shortly before Mary Lou came to Sunset Ridge, a survey sponsored by the national Education Association and the local teachers'

organization revealed "lack of teacher satisfaction" in all twenty-one categories measured.

They tell stories of how "in the old days" parent involvement had been minimal and teachers had felt only marginally involved in the school's problem-solving and decision-making process.

One teacher reports incredulously that "we even had discipline problems with some of our students back then."

Five months into the school year three years ago, the principal unexpectedly resigned.

Mary Lou, who had just demonstrated her systematic climate improvement could work in one of the other schools, was chosen as the replacement.

In remembering the situation, there is no question in Mary Lou's mind about what was expected of her. "I was expected," she says candidly, "to turn the school around."

Only two principals had served as leaders in the school's seventeen-year history. Even so, their leadership styles had differed, provoking, as some staff members observed, "frustration and uncertainty."

Mary Lou's observation: "When leadership styles exhibit qualities which are so diverse, it becomes difficult for a new leader to unify school community; to inspire commitment to unity is difficult because unity comes from the shared and active participation in the creation of change."

STRATEGIES

Dedication to Involvement

Early in Mary Lou's administration she made an important strategic decision: she would seek to unify the staff and parents by actively

involving them in problem-solving, decision-making, planning, and in managing change. No longer would parents and staff recommend change; they would be actively involved in making change happen.

The details of her strategy emerged as she initiated the first stage: organizing for change and needs identification.

Organizing for Change

Mary Lou's first official action was to request volunteers to help acquaint her with the concerns and needs of the school, the seven teachers who volunteered became the nucleus of the "School Climate Improvement Committee."

Initially the SCIC served as an advisory and communications facilitating group. The group met frequently during the remaining four months of the school year, sharing their knowledge about the school, conducting informal surveys, undertaking projects, and giving the principal advice about operational decisions.

Mary Lou's observation: "They agreed with me that a school is improved by improving the people in it." According to Mary Lou, "A school is a place where everyone teaches and everyone learns."

During this period, Mary Lou discovered that the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) which had been appointed by the previous principal, had been "inactive" for some time. It became a priority to re-activate the council and to involve its leadership in the school improvement process.

Mary Lou's next move was to invite the PAC president and vice-president to serve on the School Climate Improvement Committee. Thus assuring open communications between the two organizations.

They were to commit themselves and the other PAC officers to work with the principal in a summer study of the parent role in parent/staff interaction. The plan was to "set the direction" during the summer and then to share their conclusions with the staff and other members of the community in the fall.

At the conclusion of the summer of study the PAC indicated that they would like to move the school from a policy of limited parent involvement to a policy of open parent involvement. The means chosen to bring about this change would be the establishment of the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO).

Early in the fall Mary Lou presented the recommendation to form the PTO to the staff, who agreed to support the new organization. At the first PTO meeting of the new school year -- a traditional "open house" -- parents and staff formally voted to establish the organization.

Mary Lou's comment: "This was the first invitation to expand parent participation, to the exchange of ideas and to two-way communication between home and school."

Needs Identification

During her first four months as principal, Mary Lou listened a lot. She listened to parents, to members of the SCIC, to staff members, and to the children. She conducted her own informal needs assessment.

A formal needs assessment, however, had been conducted earlier in the year by the previous principal. A shortened teaching day was scheduled during Mary Lou's first month as principal so that she could share the findings of the study with the staff and request their feedback.

Tabulation of the assessment revealed four major categories of need which had been contributing to low teacher morale:

1. Lack of principal's leadership
2. Lack of communication with parents
3. Lack of discipline consistency, and
4. Lack of teacher involvement in school operation.

Specific areas of need related to the four categories were identified as:

- establishment of mutual respect and trust
- encouraging direct communication
- having teacher input on supplies and materials
- relying on principal support
- stressing team interaction
- preparing worthwhile faculty meetings
- clarifying the philosophy of discipline
- sharing the school goals with parents
- working more closely with parents
- desiring a principal whose qualifications included the ability to be:
  - positive
  - concerned
  - supportive
  - cooperative
  - encouraging
  - understanding
  - problem solving
  - democratic

- professional
- communicative
- a strong leader
- a trust builder

The school's needs, from the point of view of the staff, had been clarified.

A second source of data was the group and individual meetings which Mary Lou began holding with parents. The only parents who had previously been involved were a small group of room mothers, four PAC officers, and five parents who had been working as classroom volunteers. The need to improve parent involvement and parent school communications quickly became obvious.

Another piece of needs information came from a district-wide study, the National Educational Association Profile, which had been conducted earlier in the year by the local teachers' organization. This survey revealed that in Sunset Ridge there appeared to be lack of teacher satisfaction in twenty-one of the twenty-one factors addressed.

"To a large extent," Mary Lou observes," the NEA study validated the previous principal's study."

Twelve categories reinforcing already determined needs were identified as follows:

- working conditions
- non-teaching duties
- physical facilities
- professional attitude of the principal

- supportive role of the principal
- teacher-principal relationships
- teacher-pupil relationships
- cooperation among teachers
- confidence in the administration
- teacher involvement in decision making
- teacher involvement in policy formation, and
- pupil attitude and leadership

Additional needs information was obtained from the students. Mary Lou met with all students from all grade levels, asking them such questions as:

- "What does your school mean to you?"
- "What do you like and dislike about your school?"
- "What type of changes would you like to see here?"
- "Would you work towards helping to make these changes?" and
- "What is your opinion about students' behavior?"

Their responses convinced Mary Lou that students considered themselves able to assume leadership to help improve their school. Strengthening student leadership emerged as an important priority in the school's improvement plan.

By the end of the first summer, six months after becoming Sunset Ridge's new principal, Mary Lou had accumulated and, with assistant from parent and staff leaders, had interpreted a substantial amount of needs information.

The next step, priority-setting, was to take place during the second year.

Raising the Level of Parent and Staff Awareness

"Change," says Mary Lou, "must not take place in an atmosphere of ignorance. Decisions regarding the school should be made by people who know what they are talking about. Change must be information-based."

To help the parents and staff increase their information base Mary Lou set about providing learning opportunities for everybody.

All faculty meetings were organized to include, in addition to the usual business and operational items, a variety of awareness items. The faculty learned, for example, about school climate - its definition and the rationale for its improvement. They learned about promising practices which might improve their teaching.

Staff members were encouraged to read professional literature and to share what they learned with one another, both formally and informally.

A daily bulletin "clipboard" informed staff members of what was happening in the school, raised professional issues, and encouraged teachers to read and to share ideas.

"Another productive activity," says Mary Lou, "has been our participation in the Metro-Northern School Climate League, an organization of twelve schools from five districts. Each member school sends its principal plus a small number of teachers as its representatives to league meetings. Some schools, such as Sunset Ridge, also send parent leaders.

The league, one of several sponsored by the Colorado Department of Education, provided continuous support service to the faculty and parent leaders as they worked to improve the school.

The biggest advantage to Sunset Ridge of league membership, according to Mary Lou, was "the opportunity to visit other schools, attend

conferences tailor-made to our needs, and learn from the league's consultant."

Several Sunset Ridge SCIC members and all task force chairmen served as visiting team members on "mini-audit"[1] teams to other schools.

Mary Lou believes that participation on these teams contributed significantly to the parent and faculty leaders' growth in their understanding of the climate change process.

"By helping others," she says, "we learned more about how to help ourselves."

Priority Setting and Planning

By the end of the first year of change process Mary Lou, her staff, and her parent leaders were ready to identify priorities for the improvement of their school's climate. Coincidentally, the school district leadership at the time, was calling for each school to establish its own priorities and to write its own multi-year improvement plan.

The Sunset Ridge staff and parents were ready. With leadership from the SCIC, and armed with information from their needs assessments, they decided that their climate improvement efforts would be focused on five priority areas:

1. General Climate: to determine and institute change in an unfavorable school climate
2. Community Relations: to establish communication between home, school and other groups
3. Physical Plant: to identify needs and begin implementation to improve plant interior and exterior
4. Staff: to establish an understanding of human relationships or promote staff harmony, and

[1] A "mini-audit" is a process developed by the Colorado Department of Education which enables a visiting team to assess a school's climate and assist local staff members and parents with priority-setting.

5. Student Leadership: to involve students in a leadership capacity

Organizing School Improvement Task Forces

Once agreement had been reached on the school's priorities, working groups, called task forces, were formed to manage the school improvement activities and projects.

At this point, according to Mary Lou, faculty members and parent leaders "were in full agreement" regarding what needed to be done. They expressed, "enthusiastically" the desire to begin work.

It was decided that the SCIC would be the matrix for all task force activities. Six task forces were formed:

1. The Objectives Task Force was assigned the job of monitoring, with the principal, the school's five-year plan and the other task forces' contributions to the goals of the plan. The group's function is to monitor and report, thus keeping the SCIC informed of the task forces' progress.

2. The Discipline Task Force took the responsibility for researching information regarding positive approaches to improving discipline, devising student behavior guidelines, and organizing a series of workshops to improve discipline.

3. The Testing and Analysis Task Force was assigned the task of analyzing and interpreting the results of the school's testing program and providing leadership to the staff for relating instructional curricular improvement to their analysis.

4. The School Philosophy Task Force accepted the responsibility for writing the school's philosophy, securing staff and parent support for the philosophy, and recommending ways for strengthening the school's practices so that congruence between belief and practice would be enhanced.

5. The Hospitality Task Force assumed the responsibility for hosting social and professional activities and for recognizing and expressing appreciation to those who contributed to the school's success.

6. The Student Leadership Task Force organized the school's first student council, providing leadership training for pupils, and sponsoring activities to recognize and encourage pupils' involvement in school improvement activities.

At the conclusion of the Colorado Department of Education-sponsored mini-audit, conducted during the seventh month into the school's plan, two new task forces were added, bringing the total number to eight. These task forces were:

7. The Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Task Force accepted the task of promoting harmony through providing training sessions in problem-solving and decision-making for the staff and strengthening the problem-solving/decision-making processes operating in the school, and

8. The Effective Communications Task Force, which provided support for all task forces, established parent/child communications, initiated the school newsletter, sponsored awareness workshops and inservice meetings, and instituted several other positive activities for the staff.

Each task force has been expected to develop and submit for SCIC approval a series of action plans and to form sub-committees as needed.

By the time the eight task forces had been organized, Mary Lou could announce that all faculty members were serving on at least one task force and that every parent who wanted to work on task forces had been assigned to do so.

"A task force," says Mary Lou, "takes its vitality from the energy of its members. The varied points of view, the enthusiasm, and the

dedication of each member brings strength, breadth, and direction to the operation."

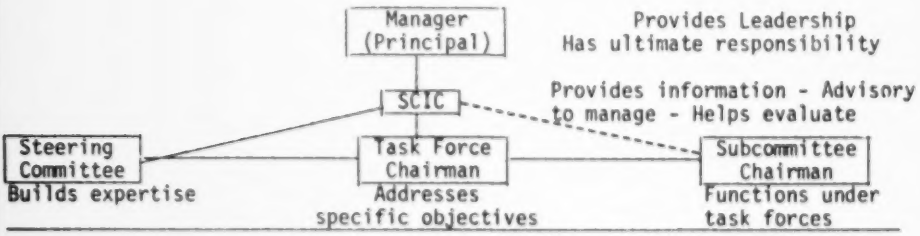
"The key to the successful operation of a task force," she adds, "is the task force leader who is the vital link and who provides the enthusiasm and direction."

"The principal," she continues, "has an obligation to be a vital part of each task force's operation. The leadership responsibility of the principal does not disappear with the establishment of these action teams; rather, the importance of the principal's leadership increases as leadership is shared. The principal must activley seek and encourage participation of parents on each task force if true community spirit is to prevail.

9. The Complete Organizational Structure Once the task forces were organized and staffed, Mary Lou could call her organizational efforts complete. At that point she called an organizational meeting of the SCIC, task force leaders, sub-committees, and the steering committee to launch the long-term school improvement project.

"I had designed," says Mary Lou, "an operational and responsibilities chart to serve as the basic procedure to be followed." That chart appears in Figure 1.

Figure 1



In describing how this organizational structure functions. Mary Lou continuously emphasizes the need for strong leadership from the principal.

"It must be remembered," she says, "that the ultimate responsibility for school improvement belongs to the principal. I emphasize constantly that the principal, in serving as manager of the SCIC, must provide early and consistent direction upon which the committee can build."

An important part of the principal's role, she believes, is the careful structuring of each component of the organization.

The steering committee, for example, which serves as a management team with the SCIC, has been assigned the task of "gathering information and building expertise for the group."

Each member of the steering committee has the following responsibilities:

- gathers current information
- conducts research
- assesses other schools as mini-audit team members if possible
- participates in local climate clusters, i.e., Metro/Northern Climate League
- attends educational workshops and state conferences
- gives feedback to building staff
- serves as hosts and hostesses to guests regarding any climate improvement activities
- serves as consultants to other schools if asked
- serves as task force chairman if possible

The roles of task force leaders have been equally well defined. Each leader is expected to:

- determine objectives from input
- make assignments and set deadlines
- develop management action plans and
  - implement
  - monitor
  - document and
  - evaluate the plans
- report to general committee, et. al.
- attain closure
- conduct inservice and
- work with subcommittee chairman

Subcommittee chairmen, who serve as leaders responsible to task force chairmen, have been assigned the following responsibilities:

- address a well defined area under a specific task force
- report to the task force leadership and SCIC if requested
- receive direction from the task force and
- support the work of the task force

The community relations subcommittee, for example functions under the communications task force. The chairman's job and that of her committee includes the gathering of information on staff - such as professional involvement, contributions to the school, honors, and special recognition. Community activity news such as Scouts and Little League is also gathered. A column is then published in the school newsletter so that all may enjoy the diversity of offerings of the school community.

The school newspaper editor and her staff are also a subcommittee of the Communications Task Force.

"A school organized for systematic change" according to Mary Lou, "is very different from a school organized for maintaining the status quo. It looks different; it functions differently; it feels different."

EVIDENCES OF SUCCESS

The Sunset Ridge SCIC has formally and informally evaluated the impact of their and their colleagues' efforts on the school. They have good reasons to believe:

1. That they have indeed improved their schools' climate
2. That students' achievement has improved markedly, and
3. That symptoms of alienation among the children have declined.

Evidence that Climate Was Improved

After the first twelve months of the school's climate improvement efforts, the Effective Communications Task Force, working with the Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Task Force, administered Dr. William Maynard's School Climate Profile[2] to the faculty. One year later, after a total of twenty-three months of climate improvement work, the assessment was repeated.

The instrument, developed and published by Maynard's Effectiveness Institute, consists of fifteen climate process determinants with five items for each determinant. Respondents were asked to rate a total of 75 items. For each item respondents were asked to rate both the current ("what is") and the ideal ("what should be") state.

The first time the instrument was administered, there was no significant difference between the real and the ideal state for nine of the

[2] Further information regarding this instrument and its use is available from Dr. William Maynard, Effectiveness Institute, 2249 152nd N.E., Redmond, WA 98052 (206) 641-7620.

fifteen categories (45 items of the 75). This information tended to reinforce the faculty's strong feelings that good things were happening in the school.

One year later the results were even more positive.

For 75 of the 75 items there was no significant difference between the real and the ideal.

"We were elated," said Mary Lou, "and we continue to be elated."

Items measured the following categories:

- technical skills
- goal setting
- interaction styles
- problem solving
- identifying and dealing with conflict
- effective communications
- decision making
- respect
- trust
- high morale
- loyalty
- opportunity for input
- school renewal
- caring, and
- cohesiveness

Further evidence of the school's positive climate has been gathered from each task force's end of the year report. An analysis of the reports shows that the task forces have been active, that they have engaged in

"highly significant" activities, and that their leaders feel positively about the outcomes.

Following are some examples of task force accomplishments during the past year (not a complete list):

- The discipline task force conducted workshops on classroom management, conducted a survey regarding disciplines problems, published articles in the school newspaper regarding positive discipline, and developed guidelines for students behavior.

- The effective communications task force conducted workshops on communications, sponsored community relations committee activities, and published the school's newspaper.

- The hospitality task force organized appreciation breakfasts and brunches, established rememberance communications for birthdays, illness, and special occasions, and served as hosts and hostesses for a variety of school activities.

- The objectives task force clarified the district's curricular objectives, assisted in determining the school's new learning objectives, and evaluated the progress of all of the school's five year improvement plans and task force management plans.

- The philosophy task force reviewed relevent research, conducted a survey of parents and staff, and developed a school philosophy which was unanimously accepted.

- The problem-solving/decision-making task force held an awareness workshop on behavior and leadership style, conducted and interpreted the school climate survey, and assisted with the leadership style workshops.

- The student leadership task force established and operated the school's first student council, taught democratic procedures to pupils, and sponsored a series of leadership development and morale-building activities.

- The testing and analysis task force reviewed all test results for the past six years and recommended strategies for improving achievement.

Also from the task forces' end of the reports came a series of enthusiastic comments from the task force leaders. These comments constitute further evidence that those involved in the school's improvement process felt positively about the results. Some examples:

a. From The Communications Task Force

"Since I have been chairman of the communications task force at Sunset Ridge Elementary for the past one-and-one-half years, I have observed some significant changes in communication skills utilized by the parents, staff and students. Projects such as "Lunch With the Principal" have enabled staff members to feel more comfortable in expressing their feelings to the administrator. Rather than complain behind turned backs, teachers now are able to state differences of opinion through direct and open communication. They recognize that the principal sees them as an equal professionally and they respect her more as a person and professional because of this.

"Teacher of the Month" has allowed students, parents, and other visitors the opportunity to learn about individual teachers in a more personal way. The students love seeing that their own teachers were once

kids too. In addition, we have all learned interesting information about our colleagues that would otherwise not be shared on a day-to-day basis.

Our weekly scheduled Aerobics Class, taught by two staff members, for parents and teachers, has enhanced personal contact in an informal manner. A comaraderie has developed among the teachers and parents participating. Volleyball games between our school and other elementary schools have helped our staff to become closer in working for a common goal in an informal and fun way. School spirit has soared during these games, as well as improved public relations district-wide.

Our school newsletter is a two-way communication instrument. Parents submit articles, SCIC submits reports, students present their school and the principal writes a significant happenings and pride column.

In the final analysis we are all developing more insight into each other as individuals and at the same time recognize that we are all an integral part of a team. Many of us recognize the importance of this insight as a key to communication for positively achieving the goals for school improvement at our school. It has been a privilege and pleasure to observe and be a part of such healthy change and I will continue to be committed to climate improvement."

Marilyn White
Speech and Language
Specialist

b. From the Hospitality Task Force

"As our Hospitality Task Force chairman, I have seen within our school, (Faculty, Staff, Parents, Administrator), a tremendous effort for climate improvement.

There is a terrific feeling of trust and friendship here. We are willing to help each other because we care, and under our Principal's leadership our goals are going to be accomplished without any doubts. One of them is to try to make our environment pleasant to work in and as appealing to children as we can make it. We can be compared to a large family where all members are individuals; we interact and work happily for the benefit of our students and ourselves. We are a school with a positive, humane climate, one that is a happy, safe and productive one!"

Esther Mesquida,
Kindergarten

c. From The Philosophy Task Force

"We have created a philosophy of operation and dedication to children with guidelines for interpersonal relationship. It is a successful effort."

Gary Maureck
Fourth Grade

d. From the Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Task Force

"Our task force has moved forward with our efforts and has shown improvement in school climate in its first full year of operation.

There is excellent communication between principal, central administration and faculty. If we identify a potential problem we can discuss it and deal with it before it becomes a serious problem.

Secondly, the more open communication we now experience involves greater input into decisions that concern faculty and school operation. Therefore, decisions are often jointly approved rather than being decided upon and handed down.

Another means of better communication and decision making we have found successful has been our use of different types of surveys, questionnaires

and evaluations that poll faculty feelings about different programs in operation and analyzing their outcomes.

This task force feels that we have had a definite impact on a more open and positive type of communication in our school. We have helped in solving problems and decision making and we have enhanced our school goals toward positive school climate."

Dolores Padilla
Fifth Grade

e. From The Student Leadership Task Force

"We believe that the Leadership Task Force has contributed a great deal to our overall school climate program. Our students have been directly involved in school climate. Through this involvement many have learned to take responsibility, make decisions and develop a new sense of pride in their school.

There have been a lot of changes in our school since the students became involved in the leadership task force. Students now have a chance to express their ideas and then see them happen. Due to the organizational structure of our task force groups there has been better communication between the students and teachers. Even the students themselves are communicating better. Students are able to express themselves in an atmosphere of trust, concern and mutual respect.

The leadership task force has provided an excellent means for children to get involved in their school. Before we developed our school climate program there was very little student participation in school activities outside the regular classroom. We are proud of our students' willingness to be both leaders and followers in the positive change pattern."

Marilyn Jerde
Fourth Grade

f. From the Objectives Task Force

From the parent who had been elected by the faculty to be chairman of the Objectives Task Force came this reply to the question as to the extent she felt that the climate of the school had improved:

"The evidences of a positive climate at our school in the past two years has been overwhelming in every area.

From our parent point of view, the simplest act of entry into the building gives a marvelous welcome to the visitor. The building is immaculate; the floors shine, and you can see objects reflected in their high gloss. There is a faint aroma of fresh paint. The children and teachers have decorated the halls with attractive displays of their work, and bright and colorful boards give positive messages to the casual reader.

Entering the office is a pleasure for the atmosphere is very warm and pleasant with happy people inside --- it's a fun place to enter.

Because I have the opportunity, perhaps rare or unknown in many schools, to participate with the teachers of my school as part of an educational team, I can see many wonderful happenings. I am proud of our staff. Their participation in all areas is evident. Professional growth for our teachers is very clear in the attitude about themselves in their classrooms and in their participation in our task forces in operation.

I feel that our positive climate has produced in our children a real pride in their school; they are excited about coming to school and I see no evidence of discipline problems.

I, like my children, am proud to be a part of this school."

Susan Littlejohn
Parent

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

In school after school which has undergone systematic climate improvement the evidence is accumulating that as climate improves, achievement is likely to improve also.

Sunset Ridge is no exception. Achievement improved quickly and substantially, as is shown in Figure 2 and 3.

Following is a summary of the report of the Achievement Testing Analysis Task Force:

"From my perspective as Task Force chairman, I'd like to report that I have been gratified by the results of the 1983 testing as revealed by the Schools Needs Assessment Profile.

Our SNAP results were concerned with the two elementary grade levels tested throughout our district, grade two and grade five.

We compared our 1983 results with those of 1981 which was the year of the previous testing for these grades. Althougn all areas were at or above national average in 1981, we see an even greater rise in scores across the board in 1983.

Our 1981 second grade scores ranged from three months to twelve months above the norm while our 1983 scores ranged from nine months to fourteen months above the norm.

Our 1981 fifth grade scores ranged from norm to eleven months above the norm while our 1983 scores ranged from nine months above the norm to a phenomenal thirty-four months above norm.

While teachers at our school have shown a great deal of pride in what has been a consistency in excellence in our test scores, this year's

scores constitute excellent proof of school climate improvement. Consequently the scores are a source of encouragement to all of us."

Emily J. Johnson
Third Grade

Figure 2

COMPARISON OF SUNSET RIDGE ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS

Grade 2

	Obtained Score		Months Above Norm, 1981	Obtained Score		Months Above Norm, 1983
Total Language	3.1	=	6 months	3.8	=	13 months
Total Math	2.8	=	3 months	3.4	=	9 months
Total Reading	3.0	=	5 months	4.1	=	16 months
Total Science	3.7	=	12 months	3.5	=	10 months
Total Social Studies	3.3	=	8 months	3.7	=	12 months
Total Battery	3.0	=	5 months	3.9	=	14 months

Norm 2.5 Range 3 months to 12 months beyond norm in 1981

Range 9 months to 14 months beyond norm in 1983

Figure 3

COMPARISON OF SUNSET RIDGE ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS

Grade 5

	Obtained Score		Months Above Norm, 1981	Obtained Score		Months Above Norm, 1983
Language Mechanics	6.4	=	9 months	7.7	=	22 months
Language Expression	6.6	=	11 months	8.9	=	34 months
Spelling	5.5	=	0 months	7.2	=	22 months
Total Language	6.4	=	9 months	8.0	=	25 months
Math Computation	6.0	=	5 months	6.7	=	12 months
Math Comprehension/ Application	5.8	=	3 months	6.4	=	9 months
Total Math	6.0	=	5 months	6.7	=	22 months
Reference Skills	6.0	=	5 months	7.3	=	18 months
Comprehension	6.6	=	11 months	8.2	=	17 months
Vocabulary	6.0	=	5 months	6.7	=	22 months
Total Reading	6.1	=	6 months	7.7	=	12 months
Science	6.4	=	9 months	7.0	=	15 months
Social Studies	6.6	=	11 months	7.8	=	23 months
Total Battery	6.1	=	6 months	7.3	=	18 months

Norm 5.5 Range norm to 11 months beyond norm in 1981

Range 9 months to 34 months beyond norm in 1983

SYMPTOMS OF ALIENATION

Another commonly reported result of systematic climate improvement is a reduction of symptoms of alienation among children. The discipline task force chairman, in response to a request for a summary statement, submitted the following:

"We are proud that our discipline is based on the positive rather than lists of negative "do nots". The emphasis in our school is placed on developing in the students an attitude of pride in themselves and the school. This continually developing pride is becoming more evident in school activities and hall conduct and playground behavior. Our students care about our school because it cares about them.

The staff is helping develop their pride in class and Student Council activities. There also has been a commendable effort made by the staff to help the students be subjected to "good behavior" by better control of their classes upon entering or leaving the building, using the halls and the lunch line. Rules here were not made for the students by teachers but rather the teachers made rules for themselves and the children have learned excellent self control.

Our task force concludes that we identified student discipline as a problem in January of 1981, have worked diligently toward change and now as we begin the 1983-84 school year, two years later, we can point with pride to the fact that there have been very few discipline referrals to the principal, our children are happy and secure; parents feel a security in their school, and we, as a task force, can conclude, based on survey observable changes, that we do not have a discipline problem in our school. We have children with excellent self image and excellent self control.

Willa Collingsworth
Second Grade

TWO FINAL COMMENTS

Mrs. Barbara Bowen, president of the Sunset Ridge P.T.O., when asked if she felt climate had improved, gave the following answer:

"I have worked with our school for two years, I have served on task forces and on the P.T.O. Board and I have seen the emergence of:

- excellent leadership for our school
- enthusiastic, concerned and personable staff
- an interested and active parent group who have worked on many interior projects such as new draperies and many exterior projects to help beautify the grounds
- a clean, attractive renovated building with a remodeled bright and attractive media center and custodians who care
- happy and eager children participating in student government and loving their teachers
- great communication between home and school

Yes, I believe we do have a positive attitude in our school. Our children see district, staff and parents take an active co-operative interest and concern in their program. And we, by our participation, obviously develop a positive environment and respect for one another."

And what does the school's secretary have to say? When asked to comment on the school's progress, Esther Pfertsh provided the following:

"In the three years I have been at Sunset Ridge I have seen a remarkable change in climate. From a very timid, untrusting atmosphere, I have seen warmth, caring, trusting individuals emerge. To have become a complete team, involved in decisions, pouring in positive input, seeking always to care, has been a phenomenal occurrence. The relaxation in conversation, sharing, and caring has to date not ceased to make me shake

my head when I remember how reserved this staff was during our first meetings.

The feeling of complete trust dominates throughout the building. The spirit of complete team work abounds, and a happy atmosphere is immediately apparent.

The children are very happy, well mannered, and caring. It is a pleasure to be part of this unique climate as it unfolds daily through staff, children, parents, district maintenance individuals and central administration personnel. What a pleasure to be the secretary of this fine school."

SUMMARY

Sunset Ridge is a much better school than it used to be. Pupils are happier, more self-confident, less alienated. They are learning more than their predecessors.

Parents are involved and enthusiastic,

And staff members feel positively about the work;

Morale is high.

Looking back over the past, three and a half years Mary Lou Zarlengo feels a sense of pride and accomplishment. As always, she gives the credit to others. "It all came about," she says, "as a result of total involvement."

"We saw a need; we dedicated ourselves to bringing positive to negative; and together we succeeded in making our school a better place for everyone."

CHAPTER III

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Pennsylvania School Climate Improvement Project

Introductory Comments

by
Eugene R. Howard

With leadership from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, two urban middle school faculties are quietly at work systematically improving the quality of their schools.

This chapter, authored by two state department staff members who served as project directors, provides educators elsewhere with a road map for change. We now know, not only how to change a school, but also how to measure the impact of such changes.

In two Pennsylvania middle schools the impact has been positive and substantial. The Pennsylvania project is demonstrating that as the climate of a school improves, achievement will improve and symptoms of alienation will diminish.

Recently, additional evaluative information, not available when this chapter was written, has been published. The report of the external evaluator concludes that:

- student achievement in both schools increased in reading and mathematics; (Additional gains in other competencies were also documented for School I.)
- substantial gains in student self-esteem were documented for both schools;

- symptoms of alienation, including delinquency and drop-out rates, were positively affected; and

- faculty morale and inter-personal relationships were improved.

One characteristic of the Pennsylvania project worthy of special comment is its use of ad hoc task forces of parents, students, and staff as organizational units to effect change. Such task forces apparently played a key role in implementing the improvements agreed upon through the shared decision making planning processes.

Further information regarding this very important project, including an implementation handbook and the external evaluation report, are available from:

Dr. Ross Blust, Research Associate
Division of Educational Testing and Evaluation
Bureau of Educational Planning and Testing
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market St.
P. O. Box 911
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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Pennsylvania School Climate Improvement Project

by
Dr. Richard R. Dumaresq
Dr. Ross S. Blust

BACKGROUND

"If you really want to understand something,
try to change it."
- Kurt Lewin

In March of 1981, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinqency and the Pennsylvania Department of Education funded a pilot project of school climate improvement. The project was initiated in two urban secondary schools in the Commonwealth but later expanded to include other secondary schools. Both the Commissioner of Basic Education and the Executive Director of the Commission on Crime and Delinquency felt the time was overdue to develop a model for improving the overall climate of Pennsylvania secondary schools as a base for increasing student achievement and decreasing delinquency. The authors were assigned the task of developing and administering the project.

> We found in a number of urban schools, that teachers often had a strong belief that positive change was impossible. This resulted in a general feeling of powerlessness - of accepting the status quo and living with the situation as is. Urban school problems seemed to defy solutions. So why try?

The School Climate Improvement Project was an attempt to improve school climate by creating a process of organizational change and continuous

school renewal in urban secondary schools. Project goals included the following:

1. Strengthen collaborative planning and collegial relationships among faculty members and administrators.
2. Specify clear goals and promote high expectations among the entire school community.
3. Develop a commitment to continued improvement.
4. Increase everyone's satisfaction with the way the school operates.
5. Develop a basic thrust towards increased productivity.
6. Increase efficiency by running more effective meetings.
7. Utilize the school effectiveness research in developing school change plans.

> As one assistant principal noted, "You gave us the tools for making change. There was no quick-fix curriculum; just a lot of hard work by everyone who wanted to make the school a better place for students."

In short, the project utilized an organizational change approach to increase faculty and student involvement. It used current research and was designed to become institutionalized by the school. It was expected that students involved in the project would show decreased levels of delinquency, increased achievement, fewer behavior problems and increased attendance. Evidence of improved school climate, i.e., trust, respect, morale, caring, input and cohesiveness among the entire school community was also expected.

THE STRATEGIES

> We found that schools, like many organizations, had difficulty renewing themselves to impact satisfaction and productivity. They became mired in their interpersonal and organizational problems. They had difficulty in

sorting out priorities and focusing their work energy. The problem was one of how to bring about controlled organizational change.

The primary strategy used to produce basic organizational change was organization development (OD) technology. OD in school districts may be described as a structured, coherent, systematically planned, sustained effort at system self-study and improvement which focuses explicitly on change in formal and informal procedures, processes, norms or structures, using behavioral science concepts and techniques. The strategy used in this project was a carefully designed five stage OD change process (1. entry, 2. diagnosis, 3. skill acquisition, 4. implementation and 5. evaluation and institutionalization) which enabled each school to increase its adaptability and respond more effectively to the changing demands of its total environment. This process of organizational self-renewal was developed through wide scale involvement in systematic problem solving and decision-making within each school.

A second strategy used to achieve change was to provide each faculty member with the knowledge and assistance to be able to choose, adapt/adopt and implement the best educational products available from national research and development centers. These validated, carefully researched products and practices had been developed and tested in schools across the country while being evaluated by organizations such as the National Diffusion Network, the National Institute of Education, the National Education Assistance, Appalachia Educational Laboratories and Research for Better Schools. In addition, educational research conducted at the university level had developed a number of projects which had become nationally validated and

available for adoption/adaption.

Based on a detailed diagnosis/assessment of the school needs, a school faculty could then focus its search for effective products and practices around specific problems or goal areas. Examples of nationally validated products and practices available for faculty consideration included: student team learning, classroom management, assertive discipline, mastery learning, drug and alcohol abuse curricula and others.

In addition, the two school communities were encouraged to use their own internal resources to develop solutions to problems in their environment. Assisting them in that endeavor was the Department of Education's Resource Center which could provide schools with a computer list of ideas, promising practices and human resources on a wide range of topics. Some of these topics included: increasing student involvement, expanding student reward systems, preventive discipline ideas, effective student councils, student contracting, school-within-a-school concept and motivational strategies for students. Resources were provided to teachers upon request.

> We decided to change the way school improvement was usually done. Instead of giving faculty the answer or "truth", i.e., a guaranteed curriculum, the greatest instructional methodology or the most phenomenal classroom management program, we helped them to develop their own capacity building skills. This was a way of building their capacity for making lasting, positive changes. Then, the faculty chose the program that best met their needs. Dumping a great program on a school organization in turmoil is a waste of time. It just doesn't last.

Basic Principles

The organizational change process was predicated on the following underlying principles about promoting change in complex systems. These

assumptions form the basis for most OD work, although they have been adapted in this project to relate more closely to practices in urban secondary schools.

The basic principles were:

1. There must be support from the top for the change effort to be successful. In addition to the superintendent being aware and supportive of the process, the principal must actively promote and model new collaboration and problem-solving behaviors. The entire school community must see the new behavioral commitment of the principal, assistant principal(s) and, in some cases, the superintendent, and his/her staff before they may be willing to initiate change.

2. There must be a clear results orientation. Faculties, especially urban ones, need to achieve some concrete successes early in the process. They are not willing to wait in order to be trained in effective communication, conflict resolution techniques or running better meetings. Some problems need to be resolved solidly and quickly to help breed a success orientation.

3. There must be a change in individual behaviors before school norms, expectations, and commitment will change. The process of changing people and organizational values will take place when school procedures and interactions are changed and people are willing to try new behaviors. The training process must focus on people in the school actively engaged in solving school problems, while learning new skills to improve their personal and group effectiveness.

4. There must be a school wide team building event to initiate the process. To encourage a spirit of real collaboration, hope and commitment, a start-up event must be designed to engage the school community in diagnosis, planning, problem solving and decision making. This initial, intensive training event provides people with a new way of looking at and re-solving old school problems.

5. The initial focus of the process on school capacity building--the ability of the organization to be self-improving--so that it will use all its resources in a positive way. To that end, people spend time learning problem solving techniques, leadership skills, a school-wide decision making process, follow through skills, action planning and dealing with resistance as well as the concept of change itself.

6. The school community must be able to make use of the best educational products currently available. Rather than re-create the wheel, the school should be able to review well validated products and practices, adapt them and integrate them into their system to support the continuous self-renewal of their school.

7. The school community members must be able to use their consultants to help them through the beginning and middle phases of the OD process and assist in institutionalizing or internalizing the processes and products in their school.

8. There must be widespread involvement of the entire school community--parents, students, faculty and administrators--for identifying problems and proposing solutions.

9. Organizational arrangements must be made to help implement the process. Planned change fails most often at the implementation stage. Therefore, issues such as planning, time for follow-through, role clarification of individuals and work groups, non-involvement, union contracts and monetary reimbursement must all be dealt with adequately.

10. Change takes place through a planned, systematic process of diagnosis, action planning, implementation and evaluation. Positive change does not happen haphazardly.

11. There must be a clear set of goal priorities. Everything can not be resolved at the same time. A few priorities must be selected and those issues addressed first.

12. The process must be flexible and able to be adapted to the unique environment of a particular school. Since every aspect of the school is in a constant state of flux, the process must be able to change to meet the new needs of a dynamic organization.

13. There should be a practice that issues must be addressed in doable, small, bite-sized pieces. Solutions to problems are often impossible when large scale, general issues become the major focus, e.g., discipline. Every effort must be made to specify smaller areas to be resolved during problem-solving, e.g., cafeteria behavior.

14. There must be a maintenance of effort. Changes must remain visible, well monitored and involvement must be kept high. Support must be designed to maintain the resolved problems, otherwise regression to old, comfortable behavior is inevitable.

The previous fourteen basic assumptions thus became the underlying practical philosophy in the development of the change process employed in the project.

> One teacher mentioned, "Your process acted as a catalyst for us. It took our energy and desire and made something happen. It speeded up the pace for making improvements."

The following is an in-depth step-by-step narrative of the process used to effect organizational changes in two Pennsylvania urban secondary schools (also see Figure 1).

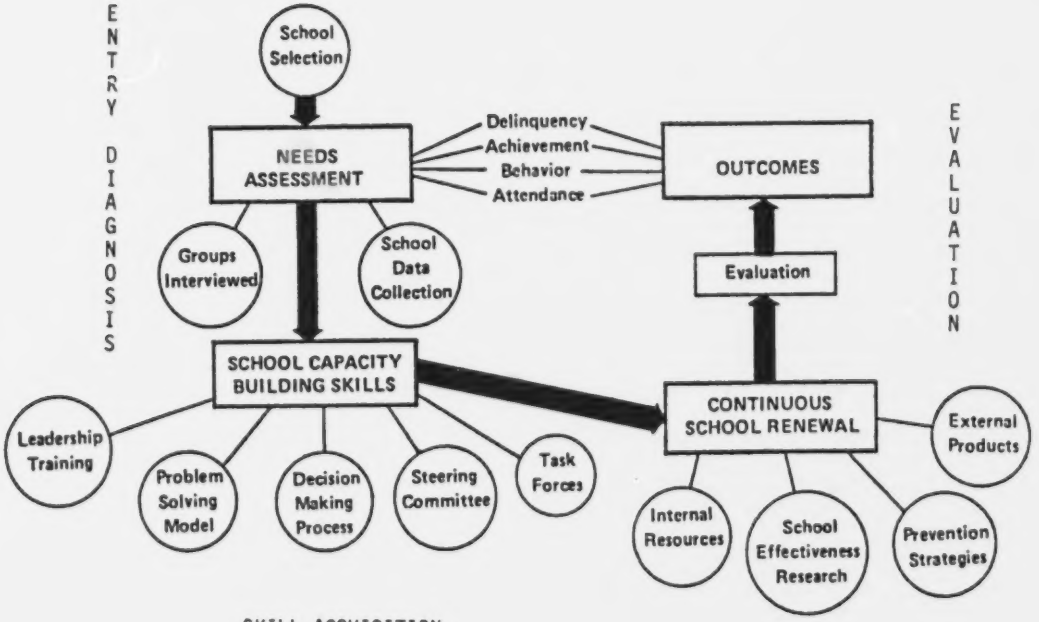
Entry

Schools were selected based on Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency criteria (high absenteeism, low achievement, behavior problems and delinquency). An initial series of meetings was held with each district superintendent, union leadership and building administrators from each school district. The project was presented to these groups by the authors and questions were answered. Next, the faculty in each school was provided a description of the project and allowed to vote, by closed ballot, whether they could actively support the school climate process in their school. A minimum two-thirds positive vote was needed to begin work in a particular school. At each school, the principal and union leadership spoke in support of the process.

> We felt that the two or three months we invested at the entry stage paid off later on in greater commitment by all groups. It was like the Fram Oil Filter Commercial when the mechanic says, "Pay me now, or pay me later." Our up-front work prevented a lot of engine trouble down the implementation road.

Figure 1

SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT MODEL



Diagnosis

First, every faculty member, administrator and eight percent of the student populations in each school were interviewed. Question one in the interview was: What do you as a school do well (in the classroom, among grade levels, in the school as a whole and between the school and community)? Question two was: What do you as a school need to do more of (or start)? Question three was: What do you as a school need to do less of (or stop)? Second, the School Climate Profile, adapted from the CKF, Ltd. (Kettering) instrument, was administered to all school faculty and all building administrators in each of the schools. Third, school symptom or condition data were collected for the school year. This included data on attendance for students and teachers, vandalism and violence data, discipline problems and suspensions along with achievement tests and EQA results.

The collected data were shared with both faculties in early June before the end of the school year. This initial feedback session was designed to make them aware of issues on a school wide basis, to begin to use a data based approach to planning and to prepare them for the summer training in leadership, problem solving, decision making and action planning.

> "During data collection one group of teachers identified the 'MASH atmosphere' that sometimes creates a bond of martyrdom in urban schools. Teachers had a tendency to view themselves as people placed together in impossible conditions and asked to perform impossible tasks. A successful school improvement process could cause them to reassess their roles and professional responsibilities."
>
> Assistant Principal

Skill Acquisition

During August, the administrators from both schools and two faculty members from each school were taken on a four-day retreat to begin to build the base for the school-wide planned change process to be initiated in early September. Basic planned change concepts were presented to the participants during almost 34 hours of intensive training. Concepts presented included: team building, supervision and achieving results, leadership styles, situational leadership, dealing with resistance, running effective meetings, problem-solving processes, a decision-making procedure, action planning and organizational planned change.

The participants looked at their own group process and how to facilitate change. They examined in-depth team building, problem-solving and a decision-making process. They also assessed their personal leadership styles using the results from three instruments they received prior to the session which were to be completed and brought to the seminar for use as a data base. It was hoped that this group would become the core of an effective change cadre who would then model and support the process for others on the faculty, in the student body and in the community.

During the first week in September, each faculty participated in 12 hours of skill acquisition training. The concepts and skills presented were: prioritizing goals, developing a collaborative problem-solving process, agreeing to a school-wide decision-making procedure, understanding planned change concepts, develop action plans, dealing with resistance to change and data based problem clarification. The two-day capacity building workshop was highly experiential in format. The faculties, in learning the

skills, participated at the same time, in resolving actual school problems. The skill training was real; it was not theoretical or hypothetical. The faculties learned new skills by actually dealing with their own organizational and interpersonal issues.

A double vote system was adopted by the school faculty as a part of the decision-making procedure. That is, each proposed solution must receive a two-thirds positive faculty vote on two separate ballots before the solution can be implemented.

Training was provided to the school faculty on structuring a steering committee and task forces. A steering committee was established to oversee the task force efforts and act as a clearinghouse for task force proposals. Task forces were formed to serve as the implementers of solutions for specific problems selected by the faculty.

Faculty were encouraged to get assistance eventually from students and parents as well as community members. This was seen as a primary element for producing change in schools. It was assumed that increased public awareness, parent involvement and student projects would help improve the school image and subsequently, school climate.

> The planned change process gives faculty a feeling of influence over their destiny. It provides them with an increased sense of personal and group efficacy - a feeling that they can make a difference in their situation. The process empowers a faculty, creates some excitement, and provides a glimmer of hope. There is a growing sense of control. People are once again creating their environment the way they want it to be.

Implementation

By the end of September, both schools had generated solutions, double voted, established a steering committee, task forces and action

plans. Thus, they were involved in the implementation phase of the planned change process. The goals of the implementation phase included:

1. establishing a planned, assessment based process for developing an ongoing school-wide problem solving attitude
2. developing a new decision making structure in each school
3. developing a long term commitment to the change plan through the establishment of action-oriented task forces and a coordinating school-wide steering committee
4. using the "best" state-of-the-art educational products and practices
5. making every effort to build on the principals' strengths and personality
6. developing self-renewing, self-improving groups (in each school) capable of making positive school changes to benefit students and teachers
7. developing faculty to work as an effective collaborative team
8. requesting assistance from parents, students and community to help gather data to set goals, work on task forces and provide support for one another
9. developing real collegial working relationships between administrators and faculty
10. achieving some immediate success as well as impacting on the school for long term results.

People working together to solve problems, set goals, communicate more effectively and implement action plans tends to elicit a more positive feeling about the school organization and the people in that organization. There is a greater perception of cohesiveness, of team spirit and a clearer sense of "we-ness."

Satisfaction in the life of the school is as crucial as the productivity issue. Both are intricately interwoven

> to create a successful school. Neither productivity nor satisfaction should be worked on in isolation. Rather, they must both be dealt with simultaneously. They are not separate concepts, but opposite sides of the same concept--organizational quality.

During the year, a number of interventions were utilized by the external consultants to keep the process on course and moving forward in a positive way. Interventions by consultants consisted of training sessions, product and practice distribution, process and role consultations, and meetings with the central office. Interventions were aimed primarily at faculty and building administrators although other groups (parents and students) were involved in the diagnostic (problem identification) phase.

Faculty and principals were chosen as the initial change group mainly because they wield the most power in a traditional school. Faculty were also chosen as the recipients of major interventions because it was felt that this would create the least dependency within the school community on external consultants. First, teachers and principals were accustomed to consultants coming in and leaving. Second, teachers were encouraged to include students and parents in their work; thus, allowing faculty to make their own autonomous interventions with forces they often feel are beyond their control. Third, students and parents tend to be much more transient in urban schools than teachers. As a result, interventions were made on the person(s) who would have the greatest longevity and stability for establishing a process of organizational renewal in schools.

Training interventions were primarily used to develop common process skills in problem solving, goal setting, communication, action planning and decision making among the faculty and principals. Training took place

during the summer of 1981, 1982 and 1983 with follow-up sessions held on in-service days while school was underway. Each training session strengthened the capacity to solve school-wide problems.

New product distribution provided the faculty with a large variety of well-validated educational ideas and practices which they could review and pilot test to see if it met their needs. Information was distributed to task forces and the steering committees regarding assertive and preventive discipline, student reward practices, in-school suspension models, effective school newspapers and student councils and instructional strategies for improving basic skills. The product distribution intervention was was not utilized to any great extent by either faculty. Although information was requested, only a few practices were adapted into the school. The majority of solutions came from the school employees problem solving and using internal resources.

> An organizational change process is not sufficient in and of itself, to promote substantive student outcomes. Practical, well-validated products with strong technical assistance can help improve schools by increasing clarity and improving faculty and administrator capabilities.

Process and role consultations were especially useful in clarifying the functions of the task forces, the steering committee and the principal. Process consultations were used to help improve communication at a task force meeting, clarify the issues in steering committee and resolve conflicts as they arose.

Finally, meetings with the district administration tended to solidify support from the top. Released time was granted for teachers, classrooms

were painted and a bell system was repaired. These interventions helped faculty see the commitment that the superintendent had for the process.

> The process is very dependent on the support of every group in the school. The principal, assistant principal, faculty, union, and faculty council can help the process succeed or fail through their organizational and personal support. Failure can be precipitated by incomplete action plans, circumventing the decision-making process, not taking time for meetings, ineffective yearly goal setting, refusal to change procedures, norms and interaction points and a principal over-controlling the process or being passive or hostile to it.

Evaluation and Institutionalization

Evaluation was ongoing throughout the project. First, there was evaluation of task force results by the faculty. For example, did task forces succeed in setting up a school-within-a-school or did they produce criterion referenced tests or did they impact on absenteeism as expected by implementing a particular program? These questions were asked as part of the action planning.

Second, another part of the evaluation component was the process evaluations used to monitor and steer the course of the project while helping to determine the appropriate interventions at the appropriate times. Process evaluations conducted by the authors determined the levels of involvement, current attitudes toward the project, training needs, problems with time and money, potential serious problem areas and levels of satisfaction. Assessment and process evaluation interventions provided faculty with the chance to stop for a moment to see how they were doing, where they were going and what seemed to be stopping them from getting there. These interventions were especially helpful as a reality test to

general negative statements raised at a faculty meeting like, "Well, no one is working on the project anymore" or "No one believes we've made any changes." This constant reality testing kept the faculty moving ahead in most instances while keeping them from becoming bogged down with the generally negative members of the staff.

Third, an evaluation of the entire project's impact on each school was conducted during the summer of 1982 and 1983. Pre- and post-data from interviews, the school climate profile, school symptoms data and EQA results were compared to determine whether and which school climate variables were impacted by organizational changes.

Institutionalization was also an integral part of the planned change process since its inception. From the beginning, the very cyclical nature of the process attempted to help the school community become a self-renewing problem-solving system. As the project progresses into the third year, more and more of the work done by the external consultants will be turned over to the principal and faculty. The external consultants will gradually decrease their involvement and transfer more of the responsibility to members of the school. To that end, internalization of the process has already begun in the schools. Problem-solving groups have met on their own, the decision-making process was conducted by the full faculty and more faculty members have begun to take leadership responsibility for moving the process forward.

> Change is seen as an ongoing process, not a one-time event. There are no easy answers, just constant striving for improvement and excellence. Change takes time and is incremental in nature. There is no notion

of change for change's sake, only fine-tuning and modifying -- a movement towards quality throughout the school organization. Major upheaval is eschewed; while steady change, built upon each new success, is the norm.

Improvement begets improvement. As soon as project participants complete a series of changes, the process is recycled and begins again, looking for new areas to improve. This is the basic belief of the planned change process: without growth and renewal, there is only stagnation and decay.

SCHOOL ISSUES

Faculty goal setting sessions were held before school began and as needed during the school year. Examples of the goals chosen included: (1) increased student self-concept, (2) improved school media image, and (3) increased academic standards. This first step of establishing goals was important because the faculty energy needed to be focused around a common set of issues. The faculty, as a whole, then became committed to a few priorities. School resources were channeled in a clear direction rather than diffused in many areas. The goal priorities became the basis for problem solving to develop solutions.

Problem solving was employed to generate solutions for the selected goal areas. For example, task forces were established to implement solutions for the following goals:

1. examine school-wide standards for homework and written work in order to recommend improvements
2. develop better school-community relationships by bringing community resource persons into contact with the school through a variety of methods
3. study and develop new programs to reward student success in individual classrooms as well as in school-wide functions

4. develop programs that place students in more visible leadership roles

5. develop a seventh grade orientation program that would continue throughout the year

6. develop a more positive image of the school through the use of mass media

7. create a school newspaper as well as a monthly calendar of events

8. improve the articulation of work between the junior and senior high schools

A faculty may choose to deal with surface symptoms and not with underlying causes to problems. In many cases, it always seems easier to hire more teachers to impact behavior or change the curriculum to improvement achievement. Schools often do not look beyond the easy, quick, surface solutions. In one of the schools, a decision was made to increase the number of guards in the hallway to control unruly students. This solution only dealt with the symptom of deeper problems -- lack of respect, inconsistent enforcement of rules and a feeling that the problem could not be solved anyhow, so why even try.

The real causes to many of an urban school's problems are difficult for people to accept and deal with. They include lack of trust among all groups, low levels of professional respect, low expectations among teachers and students, socially ostracizing certain students from the mainstream group in subtle ways, poor communication and interaction, inappropriate or inadequate instructional strategies, low sense of teacher efficacy, lack of cohesiveness/team spirit and low academic task focus.

As a result, real improvement can take place only when the basic norms, expectations, interactions and procedures in the school organization change. There is a need to impact the underlying culture and philosophy of the school before positive, lasting and continuous improvement can take place. This is a most difficult approach. It is usually resisted by a school community; but it may be the only way a school organization will really change and improve.

FINDINGS

Project results were reviewed in the first and second year evaluations. A summary of the findings from those reports follows.

In the School Climate Description Profile (SCDP) both project schools were found to have more positive teacher responses. For example, of the 16 climate conditions listed in Tables 1 and 2 there was an improvement in 13 factors in School One from 1981 to 1983. In School Two, improvements were noted in all 16 of the climate conditions from 1981 to 1983. Some of the improvements at School One included: a 10.1 percent increase in Respect, 12.7 percent increase in Trust, a 13.1 percent increase in High Morale, an 8.4 percent increase in Effective Communication and 16.7 percent increase in Ability to Plan for the Future scores (see Table 1). Increases in scores for School Two from 1981 to 1983 were as follows: 31.7 percent in Trust, 28.6 percent in High Morale, 50.8 percent in Cohesiveness, 32.4 percent in Renewal, 40 percent in Problem-Solving Ability, 28.9 percent in Effective Communication, 45.7 percent in Involvement in Decision-Making, and 43.6 percent in Ability to Plan for the Future (see Table 2). Generally, administrators noted there was an improving trend in the school.

The EQA survey provided an unobtrusive measure of the perceived school climate based on six major condition variables. Overall, teachers perceived an improvement in the basic conditions of the schools. School One (see Table 3) had improved faculty perceptions such as a change from: the 20th to the 50th percentile in "factors disruptive to classroom management," the 30th to the 65th percentile in "teacher influence upon classroom

Table 1

School Climate Description Profile
School One
Teacher Data

AREA	RAW SCORE 1981	1982	1983
General Climate Factors			
Respect	7.7	8.4	9.5
Trust	6.0	7.2	7.9
High Morale	6.3	7.7	8.1
Opportunity for Input	6.9	8.7	8.7
Academic and Social Growth	6.9	7.6	7.7
Cohesiveness	6.1	8.2	9.2
School Renewal	6.8	8.5	9.0
Caring	8.4	10.4	10.2
Process Determinants			
Problem-solving Ability	5.0	7.2	7.0
Improvement of School Goals	6.0	6.5	7.2
Identifying and Working with Conflicts	8.2	9.1	9.4
Effective Communications	8.3	9.9	10.7
Involvement in Decision-Making	4.6	7.1	6.7
Autonomy with Accountability	7.0	8.4	8.7
Effective Teaching-Learning Strategies	6.4	7.7	7.6
Ability to Plan for the Future	5.5	7.7	7.9

1981 n = 29, 1982 n = 20, 1983 n = 22

The theoretical score range for each area was from three to twelve

Table 2

School Climate Description Profile
School Two
Teacher Data

AREA	RAW SCORE		
	1981	1982	1983
General Climate Factors			
Respect	8.9	9.7	9.8
Trust	7.1	7.5	8.0
High Morale	6.1	6.2	6.9
Opportunity for Input	6.9	7.7	7.0
Academic and Social Growth	6.6	6.6	6.6
Cohesiveness	8.6	9.0	9.3
School Renewal	6.9	7.3	7.4
Caring	9.2	9.3	9.3
Process Determinants			
Problem-Solving Ability	5.6	6.4	6.2
Improvement of School Goals	5.5	5.6	5.7
Identifying and Working with Conflicts	8.4	8.8	8.5
Effective Communications	9.5	9.7	10.3
Involvement in Decision-Making	4.9	4.9	4.5
Autonomy with Accountability	6.6	6.1	5.8
Effective Teaching-Learning Strategies	6.3	6.9	6.7
Ability to Plan for the Future	5.4	6.5	6.3

1981 n = 30, 1982 n = 25, 1983 n = 27

The theoretical score range for each area was from three to twelve

decisions," the 35th to the 85th percentile in "staff interpersonal relationships" (see Table 4). Percentile rank scores were based on Pennsylvania norms developed by the EQA program. A higher percentile rank indicated more positive teacher perceptions.

Another method of documenting impact was to ask the faculty and students about the changes in the school and the consequences of being involved in this project. All teachers, staff, and administrators were individually interviewed at the conclusion of the school year. In addition, a random sample of about 8 percent of the students was interviewed. Students were asked what they liked and disliked about their school and how school had changed during the last year. Faculty were asked to describe successful activities at the classroom, school, and community level. They described what was working well and what improvements were still needed.

When comparing interview responses, the faculty generally perceived that more students were involved in the life of the school. For example, students served as aides and announcers thus performing new roles. Both students and teachers mentioned the positive impact of the new school newspaper on the school community.

Faculty were quick to note perceived improvements in student achievement, discipline and attitudes. There was still a need expressed for continued emphasis on academic achievement and the ways to make that achievement happen for students. Teachers, in mentioning improved discipline, also indicated that there seemed to be higher standards and expectations for students among the faculty; although work needed to be continued to maintain those standards.

Table 3

Educational Quality Assessment
School One
Teacher Condition Data

VARIABLE	1981 Raw Score	1981 Percentile[1]	1982 Raw Score	1982 Percentile	1983 Raw Score	1983 Percentile
Activities External to the Classroom[2]	10.78	45	10.00	20	10.20	25
Teacher/Student/Parent Relationships	12.78	15	13.09	20	14.31	30
Factors Disruptive to Classroom Management	17.49	20	19.06	55	18.74	50
Teacher Influence Upon Classroom Decisions	18.41	30	19.97	50	20.94	65
Staff Interpersonal Relationships	7.05	35	7.31	45	8.14	85
Discipline Problems	7.49	15	8.50	20	9.97	45

[1]All percentile ranks were based on Pennsylvania EQA norms for the 1983 assessment.

[2]For a detailed explanation of the variables listed by title only, see the EQA publication, EQA Manual for Interpreting Intermediate School Reports, 1983. The manual will provide a description of the measure, items, scoring of items, an index description and a norm table.

Table 4

Educational Quality Assessment
School Two
Teacher Condition Data

VARIABLE	1978 Raw Score	1978 Percentile[1]	1982 Raw Score	1982 Percentile	1983 Raw Score	1983 Percentile
Activities External to the Classroom[2]	10.13	25	11.06	55	11.52	70
Teacher/Student/Parent Relationships	8.34	1	9.71	5	9.03	5
Factors Disruptive to Classroom Management	13.89	1	15.32	5	15.32	5
Teacher Influence Upon Classroom Decisions	17.71	20	19.58	40	19.13	35
Staff Interpersonal Relationships	7.50	50	8.05	80	8.25	90
Discipline Problems	5.66	5	7.32	10	8.00	15

[1]All percentile ranks were based on Pennsylvania EQA norms for the 1983 assessment.

[2]For a detailed explanation of the variables listed by title only, see the EQA publication, EQA Manual for Interpreting Intermediate School Reports, 1983. The manual will provide a description of the measure, items, scoring of items, an index description and a norm table.

One of the strongest areas in the school was extracurricular activities. Both students and teachers noted a very positive attitude about the carnival, dances, sports, and recreation day. This area continued to be one of the strengths of the school.

The greatest improvement indicated by the interviews was shown in the areas of problem solving, conflict resolution and decision making. Teachers saw greater cohesiveness, successful task forces, increased involvement, more faculty support and cooperation, greater teacher satisfaction and increased enthusiasm. Students perceived that there was less fighting and more cooperation with the teachers. Faculty expressed a need for more ways to involve students and set aside time for school improvement activities. Teachers, generally, noted that they were more aware of the goals in their school and that they had higher standards for themselves and their students than the previous year.

The area of communication also showed improvement in the interviews. Teachers perceived that teacher-student relations had improved. There was improved and increased publicity to the community and the school's public image improved markedly. Finally, teachers saw parents and parent groups as being more involved in the life of the school. Teachers noted, however, that there was still a long way to go. They needed to implement more ways to involve parents and bridge the parent-teacher cultural gap that had kept them apart.

Of special note was the attitude and statements of teachers during the interviews. Instead of focusing on the problems and complaining about meetings, paperwork and reports, the teachers spoke of future priorities, activities and hopes. The time and effort spent in committees doing extra

planning and supporting extracurricular events with no financial rewards were seldom mentioned. But the satisfaction of better relations within the faculty, of having increased input into administrative decisions and of planning for the future, rather than reacting to present problems, became the overriding theme. All teachers agreed that these improvements were brought about by participation in this project.

Overall, the interviews supported the data collected in the SCDP and the EQA surveys. SCDP process factors in the school showed a genuine improving trend with Problem-Solving, Decision-Making and Planning for the Future leading the indicators. General climate factors such as High Morale, Trust, and Cohesiveness, also showed consistent improvement among all the data.

School data were collected on a wide range of topics. For the one school improvements were noted in the following areas: suspensions (17 percent decrease), cutting class, assaults and threats on teachers and students and disrupting class (50 percent decrease). There was a slight increase in the occurrence of leaving school without permission. Also student attendance improved from 90 percent to 91 percent. There was a reduction in teacher absence of 20 percent from 6.8 days per year to 5.1 days per year. Parents attending teacher/parent conferences increased by 300 percent from 60 to 240 parents arriving for a conference. In summary there was a positive change in the objective indicators of school conditions.

School data were collected at the other project school. Little change occurred in the number of in-school or out-of-school suspensions.

Student attendance improved from 92 percent to 93 percent despite the furloughing of the school's attendance-truant officer. There was a reduction in teacher absence from 6.8 days per year to 3.4 days per year. Overall, there was little indication of an improving trend in the objective indicators of this school's conditions.

SUMMARY

After two years of project activities in the schools, the results have been rather positive. The planned change process actively engaged faculty and administrators in addressing their perceived building level problems. Faculty perceptions indicated a feeling of increased influence over their environment. The basic employee satisfaction with the school organization did increase.

> Or as one participant wrote, "The success of the Climate Improvement Project may be credited to its simplicity. It is nothing more than codified common sense - a highly structured program for discovering and acting upon an organization's underlying consensus of thought... Climate improvement offers no easy solutions. The process does provide a proven method of harnessing and directing the collective energies of organizations which might otherwise remain mere groups of individuals, succeeding or failing without the benefit of each other's support."

CHAPTER IV

USING CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT TO BUILD DISTRICT COHESIVENESS: The San Lorenzo Valley Story

by
Eugene R. Howard

All of the other chapters in this book have described climate improvement projects in individual schools; this chapter is about district-wide improvement.

THE SETTING

California's San Lorenzo Valley, near Santa Cruz, is the kind of place in which you would expect to find good schools. The valley's three communities and its rural residential areas offer forested hills, streams, picture postcard views of Monterey Bay, clean air, and a mild, sunny climate. A significant number of the citizens are affluent with strong expectations that their children will succeed academically, graduate from college, and enter business or one of the professions. Affluence, however, is not universal; nor are the valley's residents agreed upon a definition of effective schooling.

THE DISTRICT FOUR YEARS AGO

Four years ago the valley's school district was in a state of crisis. Some residents called it a war. Some symptoms:

- Several board members, heavily criticized for running an unresponsive district, resigned.

- In response to petitions signed by hundreds of residents, the new board had fired both the superintendent and the assistant superintendent.

- The high school had lost its accreditation.

- The media was constantly using the district as a target for criticism. The credibility of the district was at an all-time low following a 20-year decline.

- The district's voters had approved only one (temporary) tax override measure and one bond issue in 15 years. They had rejected tax override measures four times and bond issues four times.

The board's advisor, who had been employed to conduct the search for a new superintendent, after conducting a series of interviews of community members, documented high levels of anxiety, dissatisfaction, and frustration among those interviewed. "The anxiety," reported the advisor, "concerns itself primarily with the quality of leadership and administration..."

As a result of the interviewing, the advisor listed 83 "qualities expected in the new superintendent." "Almost everyone," reported the advisor, "expressed the view that the primary quality needed in the new superintendent is proven leadership ability ... the kind of leadership which brings diverse groups together."

THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT

To lead the district out of the crisis, the board chose Dr. John Prieskorn, who had earned a reputation as a superintendent who could unify a district's constituents to solve educational and financial problems.

On assuming the superintendency he was immediately faced with a financial crisis, a major transportation problem, and a threatened teacher's

strike. John's recollection of the situation at that time: "There were so many things wrong, I didn't know where to start."

John Prieskorn can be described as a charismatic, open leader with smarts and vision. He listens; he learns; he analyzes; he plans; he acts; and perhaps most significantly, he communicates. He manages detail without losing sight of over-all goals. He helps others see the big picture. He also emphasizes the important role in how each part fits into the big picture.

"My job is to provide the vision for what 'should be'. I must then provide a clear plan to achieve that vision - that goal. Next I provide the autonomy to my administrators that allows them the flexibility to get the job done. Lastly, I require strict accountability which requires tangible verification that the goal has been reached. This last step assures the board and the community that real improvements have been made."

STRATEGIES

Initially John saw his mission as being to improve the climate of the district, thereby increasing levels of cohesiveness and trust. Looking back on the past four years, he describes what happened as "one big, district-wide climate project."

The strategy, however, emerged slowly; it evolved as the situation demanded and as the superintendent's and the board's vision of the future matured. Each planned change required further refinement of the long-range plan.

What happened strategically can best be described in terms of climate "determinants",[1] those characteristics of an organization which, when, altered, positively or negatively affect climate.

Analyzing the past four years from the point of view of climate, John believes that he and the people of the San Lorenzo Valley have profoundly altered four of the twelve determinants most commonly used to diagnose climate. The other eight have, of course, also been somewhat affected because climate determinants tend to have an interactive relationship with one another (e.g., Improving problem solving also opens up communications).

Those climate determinants most directly effected were:

1. Problem Solving and Shared Decision making
2. Improvement of School Goals and Planning
3. Autonomy with Accountability, and
4. Opening Communications

How were these determinants affected:

1. How Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Processes were strengthened

One of John's first acts as superintendent was to form a District Leadership Team as a means of strengthening the problem-solving and decision-making processes. The leadership team consists of all of the principals, vice principals, all classified managers and the central office administrators. They meet monthly with the superintendent and twice a year

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[1] For a list and definition of these determinants, see Appendix A. This list is an adaptation of the list originally developed by Dr. Robert Fox and Associates for Mr. Charles F. Kettering (CFK Ltd.) in 1973. See the Phi Delta Kappa publication, School Climate Improvement: A Challenge to the School Administrator, Bloomington, IN, 1975.

with the board to identify, define, and suggest solutions to problems.

Persistent, significant problems often become goals, either for an individual school or for the district as a whole. Once a set of problems becomes a goal the district's planning and management systems are activated to arrive at solutions.

Examples of some significant decisions made by the management team:

- An agreement to eliminate the mutual criticism and lack of trust between the Board and administrators.
- Adopted policies on a communications process and decision-making process between administrators and the Board.
- Agreement that all questions, concerns and problems will be discussed openly until solutions are agreed upon.

The problem-solving process which evolved consists of seven generic steps:

1. Identify and define the problems
2. Design a plan
3. Share the plan publicly
4. Report the results (both negative and positive) openly and honestly
5. Evaluate the preliminary results carefully
6. Redirect activities if necessary, and
7. Share the final outcomes with the public through the media.

John believes that the use of formal problem-solving and decision-making processes, both in the leadership team meetings and in the joint team-board meetings, have contributed directly to a feeling of trust and cohesiveness between administrators and the board.

John recalls that, initially some board members had the habit of criticizing administrators in public. Administrators occasionally did the same. The criticisms have since stopped.

"They've stopped doing that", says John, "because they now work closely enough with one another to learn to respect the other's view and to appreciate the work that each does."

2. Improvement of School Goals and Planning

John feels that the key element in his district's improvement strategy has been the goal-setting and planning processes. During his first year as superintendent, John gathered information for the goal setting process through extensive listening.

Through the press, he notified the community that he wanted to learn about the district's problems. He then spent three months listening carefully to people - in group and individually - feeling the pulse of the community. He did not defend the previous administration; rather, he sought information about what had been happening so that he could form his own opinions, develop his strategies, and develop his recommendations for goals.

The people, he found, had many complaints, "most of them valid."

His response to the complaints was to develop, with board participation, an action plan which addressed major public concerns. From a list of eighteen recommendations, the board selected six goals, as follows (paraphrased):

1. Development of a personnel evaluation system for all employees.

2. Strengthen the leadership and operation of the high school.

3. Strengthen the leadership and operation of the intermediate school.

4. Strengthening planning and instruction at the San Lorenzo Valley Elementary School.

5. Opening communications with the public, and

6. Establishing long range goals, improving district-wide planning, and strengthening staff development.

Once the goals were established, John and his assistants wrote a management plan related to each goal. Each plan detailed anticipated activities related to the goal, timelines, and evaluation criteria. He then shared the plans, in detail with the public through the media.

He asked the board to write into his contract that he would be formally evaluated every six months regarding progress made regarding each goal. A procedure was established whereby John would write a self-evaluation each six months; the board would evaluate him in closed session; and the board would then share its evaluations with the public and the media.

John's comment: "We went from a district that shared little to one which shared virtually everything; we gained immediate credibility."

Two types of goals have provided focus for the district's improvement processes; school improvement goals and curricular goals. The school improvement goals provide direction for the district's management system, and the curricular goals provide direction for the instructional system.

Once the year's improvement goals have received the board's approval, the administration's planning processes are activated. All administrators, including the superintendent, develop action plans related

to the improvement goals. At mid-year and again at the end of the year administrators are evaluated on the extent to which they have contributed to the district's goals through their school's goals. Formal progress reports are then made semi-annually by the superintendent to the board and to the public.

A review of principals' action plans reveals that principals are gradually improving their planning ability. Early plans often consisted of little more than lists of proposed activities.

Provisions for evaluation were often weak. This year's plans, however, contain mission statements, goal statements, objectives, a plan of action, target dates, a verification process, and a section on evaluation. The plan of action tends to be quite detailed. One principal, for example, developed four action statements to describe how he would use test score data to set instructional improvement priorities.

Curricular Goals

John describes the second year of his tenure as a "curriculum development year." During that year curriculum committees were organized to define goals and objectives in reading, mathematics and social studies. The process was simple but effective. Teacher and parent representatives were selected from each school and volunteered to serve on the subject area committee of their choice. Each committee analyzed the curriculum by asking teachers what was being taught at each grade level.

The gaps and overlaps were then easily identified. The curriculum was strengthened by raising the expectations and standards regarding what was expected of each grade level. The end result was a written curriculum

guide for each subject. Because of the involvement, each guide was supported by parents and implemented by teachers. This democratic approach has been very popular each year with both parents and the instructional staff.

3. Autonomy with Accountability

As administrators become more proficient in planning, managing and evaluation, they were given more autonomy.

"Authority," says John, "can only be delegated on the basis of mutually-agreed-upon action plans. Delegation without planning is like writing a blank check for an unknown product."

"Accountability," according to John, "is the acceptance by group members of the responsibility for doing what they agreed to do."

During the past four years a wide variety of committees and task forces have been organized in order to involve staff, students and parents in school improvement projects. Examples of projects:

- Develop curriculum guides for each subject, grades K-12. (A separate committee of teachers and parents representing each of the schools was established to write each of the guides.)
- Develop a special curriculum for high-achievers.
- Analyze math scores grades 1-12 and make recommendations to improve the math program district wide.
- Develop a writing skills program for grades K-12.
- Develop a curriculum for computer education for grades K-12.

Parents, as well as teachers, serve on curriculum articulation task forces. Such groups have assessed existing curricula in reading, mathematics, social studies and science. Action plans were then implemented to improve curricular congruence - the extent to which what was tested was actually taught. (One result: improved test scores)

Problem-solving task forces were organized within each building. Examples of activities:

- Restructure the High School Math Curriculum.
- Review test scores, evaluate results and write specific plans to improve relatively weak areas.
- Provide leadership and inservice to write measurable objectives that will raise the quality of academic standards.

Several school improvement task forces to improve communications and morale were also organized. Examples of improvement objectives and activities:

- Provide positive administrative leadership at the high school by sharing responsibilities and decisions with the staff.
- Provide Teacher Effectiveness Training to improve instructional quality and raise level of pride among teachers.
- Improve and clarify principals expectations of teachers regarding academic standards and students' academic achievement.
- Clarify grade level student outcomes in mathematics through a school-wide Math Improvement Task Force.

One of the most significant projects developed by faculty committees was the project to define new personnel evaluation procedures.

The committee, composed of faculty representatives from each school, studied and deliberated for four months before agreeing on a set of procedures. At key points in the process, issues were discussed by each faculty so that representatives could accurately reflect the views of their constituents. Once agreed upon, the results of the committee's work became the basis for formally re-negotiating the teacher evaluation section of the teachers' master contract with the district.

John describes the resulting system as "based on a goals approach, with a lot of emphasis on improving the quality of services."

During John's third year as superintendent several school improvement task forces were organized in response to priorities identified by using the CFK Ltd. School Climate Profile.[2] This profile enabled individual school leaders to define the strengths and weaknesses of their schools from the point of view of climate.

Examples of such projects include:

- K-12 Assertive/Positive Discipline Programs which were established by school site discipline task forces.
- Projects which were established to enhance student's self-concept through such activities as class meetings involving positive bombardment and problem solving, improved principal-student relationships and sharing of classroom strategies for improved self-esteem.
- A campaign of positive reinforcement of classroom teachers which included Teacher of the Week displays, annual Teacher Day, Excellence in Education Awards.

John believes strongly that an important responsibility of a district's administrator is to provide opportunities for anyone who wants to work on school improvement to do so.

"Involvement," says John, "increases peoples' pride and ownership in the organization. And besides," he adds, "there's a lot of work to be done in a changing organization. We need well-managed task forces and committees; otherwise nothing much happens. We gain commitment through their direct involvement. When adopted, they help assure that the change is effectively implemented."

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[2] Published by Phi Delta Kappa in School Climate Improvement: A Challenge to the School Administrator, by Robert Fox, et al. Order from CADRE Publications, College of Education, 600 South College, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK 74104

4. Opening Communications

John's administrative style is such that listening, synthesizing what is heard, and responding with well-publicized action plans is a way of life.

During the past four years this approach to communications has been learned by others. The district's project coordinator and principals obtain significant input in the planning process. Needs are assessed, usually with a formal instrument and plans are adopted and discussed with faculty and parents. As plans are implemented, progress is monitored and results are shared with staff and parent advisory groups at that school site. The media are also notified of the process and the results.

More formally, however, several organizational adjustments and procedures have been established so that communications have been facilitated. Some examples:

- Press conferences are held before each board meeting to acquaint media representatives with the background of the issues to be addressed.

- Building-level advisory committees have been strengthened and their roles clarified.

- Parents have been included as members of curriculum development committees and school improvement task forces. These include the development of curriculum guides for all subjects; the evaluation of the math program K-12, resulting in a list of recommendations to the board for strengthening the program; the development of a new curriculum for gifted students; the development of a new writing skills program and the development of a new curriculum for computer education, K-12.

- The superintendent visits each school monthly and meets both formally and informally with staff members.

- Twice a month John writes a "Superintendent's Report" column for the Valley Press. Examples of topics covered:

  - Five criteria for judging the quality of a school

  - Schools really aren't "declining"

  - A report on how the high school regained it lost accreditation

  - How the schools raised academic standards

  - Advice to parents on how to help their children succeed in school

  - The negative effects of excessive T.V. viewing

  - Comparison of our district's programs and standards to the nation-wide recommendations for excellence.

  - Results of the local schools' achievement on Achievement Program tests.

OUTCOMES OF THE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Each year since 1979, when John became the valley's superintendent, a number of symptoms of quality have shown steady improvement.

Discipline problems, especially in the junior and senior high schools have declined. Even though discipline in SLV's schools had never been a major problem, significant improvements have been noted by both teachers and parents. Kids are in class on time. There are fewer interruptions of classroom instruction. During class sessions, focus is on the instructional process.

Each of the elementary schools has independently placed emphasis on a positive and assertive discipline approach.

The high school's drop-out rate, never very high, has steadily declined.

Achievement, as measured by standardized tests and by the California Assessment Program, has generally improved. It should be noted, however, that the district's population is highly mobile; the turn-over rate among students is high (40 percent annually among elementary pupils). The district's test results depend, to a large extent, on the academic ability of pupils who leave as compared with the ability of those who move in. John and his staff believe, however, that some of the improvement has been caused by the over-all improvement in climate and an improvement in instructional effectiveness.

Figure 1 summarizes the data from the California Assessment Program. The data show four-year improvements in all nine categories except one.

Figure 1

San Lorenzo Valley Test Scores
California Assessment Program

Grade 3	1979-80	1983-84
Math	264	293
Reading	252	300
Written Language	261	294
Grade 6		
Math	263	303
Reading	266	279
Written Language	262	294
Grade 12		
Math	66.2	74.0
Reading	64.5	68.6
Written Language	63.9	71.0

Shortly after receiving notice of the 1983-84 CAP scores, John and the San Lorenzo board were informed that their high school had been named as one of the state's "Top 100," and the junior high school rated first in the county. John's "Special Notice" to the community is reproduced as Figure 2.

When translated into percentiles, the 83-84 scores are especially impressive. Twelfth grade scores, for example, rank as follows:

Math	93rd Percentile
Reading	94th
Writing	96th

Figure 2

SPECIAL NOTICE

In a new publication by California School surveys, San Lorenzo Valley High School has been identified as one of the top 100 high schools in California. The publisher has taken all scores from the state's CAP test and ranked them. In fact, SLVHS ranks number 48. The list of prestigious schools is impressive. It is with great pride that I share this information with the Board of Trustees and the community. I have included in this memo a copy of the appropriate pages from the recent publication.

Though not rated in the top 100, our own SLV Junior High also placed extremely high in local rankings. Of the eleven junior high/middle schools in Santa Cruz County, SLVJHS ranked 1st in math, 1st in writing, and 2nd in reading. (First place went to Aptos Junior High.) When the district scores were used (rather than school scores) SLV Junior High ranked number one in all categories.

(Of the six high schools in the county, SLV High School obviously also ranked number one in all categories tested.)

12.7.84
JP:ls

San Lorenzo pupils have also performed well on the Stanford Achievement Test, used until the 1981 school year, and on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, used after 1981.

Figure 3 summarizes data showing achievement gains made by pupils in grades 3 and 5. Other grade level data is similar.

Figure 3

San Lorenzo Valley Test Scores
Longitudinal Data
Iowa Test of Basic Skills

	81-82	82-83
Reading Grade 3	63	
Reading Grade 4		73
Language Grade 3	76	
Language Grade 4		76
Math Grade 3	63	
Math Grade 4		70
Reading Grade 5	60	
Reading Grade 6		70
Language Grade 5	71	
Language Grade 6		77
Math Grade 5	68	
Math Grade 6		82

Regarding achievement, John notes that test scores in the district have traditionally been high. If the scores are already high he says, "It's harder to raise them significantly than in cases where the scores are low."

Positive publicity has also been an outcome of the improvement efforts. An analysis of newspaper clippings over the past five years shows a steady increase in positive stories. Five years ago, about 90 percent of all school-related stories were negative and/or critical. Now about 90 percent are positive and supportive.

Some recent examples of story headings:

- "SLV Schools stress more academics"
- "School Newletter feedback 'positive'" (A report on parents' reaction to the re-vitalized district newsletter)
- "New school principal described as 'The Buck Stops Here' type"
- "He's tough, but respected" (Describing John Priestkorn's leadership style)
- "Trustees act to raise standards"
- "Christmas happens all the time at San Lorenzo Valley Schools" (Describing donations made to schools)
- "What do teachers do during summer vacation?"
- "Facts belie popular belief that schools are declining" (an editorial by John Priestkorn), and
- "Priestkorn gets rave reviews: trustees give boss good report card" (a report of John's annual evaluation)

A recent editorial in the Valley Press is representative of the type of publicity the district now receives. The editorial described how the school district, since John Priestkorn's arrival had balanced its budget, raised its test scores, solved its problems of over-crowdedness and obtained accreditation for the high school. The total amount of funding obtained from the state for new facilities was quoted as $6,595,758.

"The credit," according to the editorial, "goes to Superintendent John Priestkorn and Assistant Superintendent Dick Brooks."

According to the editorial, John and Dick "brought home the bacon."

The article then noted that $6,595,758, at today's prices, is the equivalent of 3,250 tons of bacon.

"The point is," according to the editorial, "effective administrators make all the difference when it comes to running public agencies."

Editorials of this kind don't just happen. They are a result of days, months, and years of hard work and honesty.

"We earned the confidence of the press," says John, "by telling them the whole truth. We reported our problems as well as our successes."

SUMMARY

John attributes his district's steady improvement in quality to his willingness to work with others to make a positive impact on those process determinants which influence an organization's climate. He believes that an organization's climate becomes more positive as more and more people become actively involved in:

- Problem solving and shared decision making
- Improvement of schools goals and planning
- Study groups and work groups which earn autonomy by being accountable, and
- Communications-opening activities.

"One thing I've learned from this experience," says John, "is that a district's climate is an important pre-condition for quality. As a district's climate improves, quality symptoms tend to improve also."

"I've also learned," he adds, "that in every community there are people of good will who can be encouraged to think and act positively. Leadership is the process of helping such people plan, set goals, solve problems, and celebrate successes. It's a process of giving people reasons to be proud. It's a way of helping people grow in their ability to shape the organization which, in turn shapes them."

"Our teachers, administrators, parents -- even our non-parent citizens -- have become actively interested and personally involved in our schools. We have been highly successful because of the cooperation and support of all these folks. I am grateful to these people for their willingness to participate. I must give credit as well to the leadership and open attitude of a courageous Board of Trustees. Without all of these people we would have accomplished little."

REFERENCES

[1]Fox, Robert, et al. School Climate Improvement: A Challenge to the School Administrator, Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, In. 1975.

[2]Ibid

CHAPTER V

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: THE NEW BASIC

Introductory Comments

by
Eugene R. Howard

Theodore Sizer[1] in Horace's Compromise has written, "One purpose for schools--education of the intellect--is obvious. The other--an education in character--is inescapable."

How can such character traits as morals, ethics, values, and citizenship be taught? Which traits should be taught? And what happens to a school's climate as a school's personality--its belief and value system becomes explicit?

Answers to these and related questions are being sought by the staff and students of South High School in Salt Lake City.

For the past four years the principal of South High, Lavar Sorensen, and his staff have been busy with an experiment, testing the assumption that a school which personifies "the American ethos" will be a productive and satisfying place for everyone involved.

This chapter, authored by Lavar, describes how a school's cohesiveness can be strengthened and its effectiveness enhanced by operating the school as a well-defined "moral society."

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[1] Sizer, Theodore R., Horace's Compromise, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984, p. 84

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: THE NEW BASIC
SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

by
Lavar L. Sorensen, Principal

Law-related education, moral instruction, civic learning, ethics education or citizenship experience -- call it what you will -- the major aim of these programs is the same: to create a moral society in which its members understand and act according to commonly held ethical principles.

A basic purpose of American public education is to identify the ethical principles upon which our nation was founded and which were written into our national documents. It is also our purpose to teach these principles and to live by them.

The American ethos consists of the following:

- Belief in the worth and the perfectability of human life on this earth.
- Conviction that democratic societies have more to offer than totalitarian ones.
- Faith in reason and in orderly solution of conflict between individuals and between nations.
- Respect for knowledge and a strong commitment to education for all.
- Protection of personal liberties within limits established by law.
- Equal protection under the law and equal opportunity for personal and economic success.

This ethos has sustained us for over 200 years. It is a balance between individual rights and the public good. While it respects diversity, it extracts conformity in some areas. While it encourages freedom it places restrictions on all members of society. While it provides equal opportunity, it expects the individual to take advantage of existing opportunities. It is a fine and delicate balance. It works well. It is working extremely well at South High School. It has been introduced into several other high schools.

South High School has faced most of the problems that plague urban schools. Many of these problems stem from a heterogeneous student body which now includes 37 blacks, 621 whites, 234 Hispanics, 30 Native Americans, 190 Asians, 50 Polynesians all attending a school built originally in 1931. Minorities make up 45 percent of the student body. The staff, however, includes only three members of minority groups on its roster of 75 professionals. South's students are highly mobile; 450 of the school's total enrollment of about 1215 (37 percent) move in and/or out of the building during a typical year. Among these transients are a large Asian contingent since all Asian students entering high school from abroad in Salt Lake City are enrolled first at South. Most of these students speak little or no English; many do not even read their native language. Their parents, like those of an overwhelmingly large percentage of students, are blue collar workers. Partly for this reason, and partly because 48 percent of South's students come from one-parent homes, 85 percent of the students have jobs. Sounds like a prescription for a steady decline, doesn't it? Yet by index after index, the school has been improving steadily.

Test scores for basic skills have increased dramatically after the creation of basic skills classes. Mean scores are now above national mean scores. Discipline was restored by a new hall policy which kept non-students out of the school and by a home study program which took disruptive students out of classes until the certified teachers who worked with them were able to mainstream them back to the classroom. A new attendance policy helped to increase average attendance to more than 95 percent, compared to 88 percent five years ago. After the student body voted to reclassify the school of 4A to 3A in keeping with a declining enrollment, athletic teams began to win more games, contributing to better school spirit. Specialized projects such as peer counseling, advanced placement classes, (10 in total compared to 2 five years ago), the operation of a restaurant within the school, and classes in computer science, an alternative school-within-a-school, a jazz band, and an a capella choir were begun to appeal to particular groups of students. As a result of all these changes, there were only eight fights reported, compared to 30 five years ago, one attack on a faculty member, and one student apprehended with a weapon in his possession last year, compared to six five years ago. Faculty absences averaged three days per teacher, this was as high as ten per teacher five years ago.

Despite this impressive record, the Salt Lake City Schools were not content to rest on their oars. With the leadership of the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. M. Donald Thomas, and the school's principal, South applied to the Danforth Foundation for funds to support a project to democratize the governance structure of the school in order to make additional improvements in its academic and social programs. The term "a Democratic school"

has an unusual meaning for South High School. Unlike most schools which call themselves democratic, South does not intend to share decision making with students or even to focus its attention directly on the student body. Instead, South intends to change the governance and the curriculum of the school in order to align them with twelve "democratic principles" identified for the Salt Lake City Schools by Dr. Thomas. These principles are:

1. Each individual has dignity and worth.
2. A free society requires respect for persons, property, and principles.
3. Each individual has a right to learn and the freedom to achieve.
4. Each individual, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, ethnic background or economic status, has equal opportunity.
5. Each individual has the right to personal liberties.
6. Each individual is responsible for his/her own actions.
7. Each individual has a responsibility to the group as well as to the total society.
8. Democratic societies govern by majority vote.
9. Democratic societies are based on law.
10. Problems are solved through reason and orderly processes.
11. An individual should be tolerant of other religious beliefs and should have freedom to exercise his/her own.
12. Each individual has the right to work, to pursue an occupation and to gain satisfaction from personal efforts.

One of the documents developed for the project related these twelve principles to the major purposes of the democratic high school project in the following manner.

1. To bring the total governance of the school into harmony with the twelve democratic principles. By governance the project means sharing decision making with the faculty on such issues as attendance and hall policy, etc.

2. To create a school climate in which the twelve democratic principles are respected and can be observed in practice.

3. To have all teachers in all subject areas develop curriculum materials and instructional techniques based on the twelve democratic principles.

4. To have administrators, counselors, teachers, students, and the non-professional staff practice the twelve democratic principles throughout the life of the school. Observers should be able to see the principles in practice and ideally they should spill over into the homes of the community.

South High School received funding for the Danforth project in July, 1981. As the first step, the principal appointed two of South's teachers, Mr. James Witucki and Ms. Gerri Sorben, to be co-directors of the project. The principal thought that people from within the school would be accepted by the faculty and hence more able to provide leadership than an outsider could. Both co-directors were released from one teaching period daily, thus teaching only four classes per day, and given an empty classroom large enough to hold project meetings for headquarters, a room which they share with the project's half-time secretary.

A three day conference in mid-August touched off the project. Participants included the Superintendent of Schools, the principal, a school

board member, several parents, representatives of the State Department of Education, teachers, students, and three consultants. This meeting helped to solidify plans and to enroll representatives of the major school constituencies as supporters of the project.

In September, the directors conducted a school climate needs assessment among the faculty. First, they asked the faculty to identify the major positive aspects of democratic schooling at South High School. A long and impressive list resulted and was widely circulated. Then they asked the staff to identify concerns which needed additional attention. This exercise identified a number of problem areas. A second school climate needs assessment was conducted later among a group which included eight parents, eight students, four teachers, two secretaries, and two custodians. On the whole, this group confirmed the findings of the professional staff.

Partly as a result of this school climate needs assessment and partly from suggestions in a Phi Delta Kappa publication, the project decided to set up six task forces in order to identify the most crucial concerns of the faculty and to begin work to meet these concerns. The climate task forces are: Respect and Trust, Continuous Academic and Social Growth, School Renewal, Current Problems, Decision Making, and Cohesiveness. Although the general and sometimes overlapping nature of these titles has caused some confusion, the idea of task forces caught on. The three directors (Witucki and Sorben refer to the direction as a troika which includes the principal) decided to assign every member of the professional staff in random order to a task force and to have each task force elect a chairperson.

Then each task force identified concerns in each of the six designated areas. After this work had been completed, the six chairpersons drew task force assignments out of a hat and set to work. This technique seems to have worked quite well, generating enthusiastic support from a significant portion of the faculty and administration.

Three all-day meetings were held early in December while substitutes covered classes. About twenty-five people, the membership of two task forces, attended each meeting. After general sessions, the task forces set to work to identify and document a single major task, called a concern, for the task force to tackle. Two task forces identified the redevelopment of a Teacher Advisor system which had fallen into decay. Other task forces decided to focus on a student orientation program; developing a problem-solving process, perhaps through a fairness committee, to cope with problems raised by students or staff; developing decision-making skills in the curriculum of the school; and improving students self-image. The fairness committee became functional in December of 1982. This was a major accomplishment. Each task force documented the existence of a problem, specified goals, defined the problem succinctly, recommended a solution, and assessed the democratic nature of that solution by measuring it against the twelve democratic principles.

As solutions were developed and methods to implement them into the school were designed, they were incorporated into the school governance structure thus becoming part of the school procedures. Later in the school year, each task force reported its findings to the entire faculty. As recommendations from the task forces were accepted, they were either

implemented immediately or assigned to a new committee for further action. The development of curricular materials for the new Teacher Advisory Program is a good example of further action.

The development of curriculum materials congruent with the twelve democratic principles in all academic disciplines was the last major task for development by every faculty member. To begin with, each faculty member chose four of the twelve democratic principles he or she felt could be easily incorporated into lesson plans. They were not to block out any portion of time that would be devoted only to the democratic principles, but the democratic principles would be incorporated into the lesson plan as an example or, more specifically, as a basic concept to correlate with other portions of the lesson plan. This curriculum has been written. It is being used in classrooms. It is available to other schools or organizations.

Because each faculty member had been inserviced intensively in techniques of the Dilemma Discussions by Dr. Edwin Fenton, Professor from Carnegie-Mellon University, the projects chief consultant, the Dilemma Discussions became a major method used by faculty members to incorporate the Democratic principles into their daily lesson plans. As stated before, each faculty member chose four democratic principles to cover. Later all twelve became part of each teacher's course of study.

The curriculum for the Teacher Advisory program was created using material developed by the Cambridge School Committee. Elsa R. Wasserman was the chief consultant and inservice director. The Teacher Advisory Curriculum is written. It is being used in each classroom. It also is

available for use by other schools.

A portion of the school year was used to hold a constitutional convention, with the chief objective being to write a new, modern and up-to-date student constitution. The constitution was written using the twelve democratic principles as its foundation. The preamble of the constitution became the twelve democratic principles. Every student in the school was involved in the development and writing of the constitution. Many discussions were held and issues were raised and resolved. The democratic process became part of each issue. Later in the school year, the constitution was adopted so that it became the document to govern all student activities beginning in the Fall of 1983. The original constitution had not been changed since 1934 when it had been originally written and adopted.

To keep the democratic school viable at South High School, constant assessment and evaluation must take place. When features of governance break down, modifications must continually be made. This would include all school policies, practices, and structural development. Because school climate must also be congruent with the twelve democratic principles, evaluations of this aspect of the democratic school in each classroom as well as the administration of the school must constantly be monitored and kept up-to-date. Curriculum is constantly being reviewed and introduced into courses of study and daily lesson plans. All of these activities must be congruent with the twelve democratic principles.

A rationale for Ethics Education or the Democratic School at South High has been established. That rationale states:

1. There is a set of American Democratic Principles, and it is known and accepted that the project is based upon twelve such principles identified by the Salt Lake City School District.

2. Indoctrination of the basic values is legitimate as long as students are also made aware of what is being done; that is one way to learn to appreciate the Democratic Principles as a basis for understanding and learning to apply them.

3. The twelve principles are basic, and schools can be governed using these principles.

4. Given the importance of the principles to our society, efforts must be made to teach them; demonstrations of applying the principles are an important way of learning about them.

5. Helping students see the relevance of the values to their own lives and helping them to make decisions based upon the values are an important means of ensuring learning that will last beyond high school.

6. Working conditions and the learning environment will be enhanced when teachers apply the Democratic Principles.

7. Democracy in school governance does not necessarily assume that everyone must participate in all decisions.

We believe there is a way that citizenship education can become a part of a school. That which is described in this paper is one way. It is a way in which a total school can become involved. It is assumed that, as students learn either in a direct or indirect way the democratic principles used to develop the American Ethos over 200 years ago, their lives will be influenced sufficiently from attending South High School to pass on to their families and the community the values we so dearly cherish.

CHAPTER VI

THREE SNAPSHOTS

by
Eugene R. Howard

These "snapshots" describe three very exciting projects. The descriptions are, however, less detailed than were the descriptions of the case studies.

How can a large district staff academy influence the climates of client schools?

How can an inner-city elementary school combine the concepts of climate with high expectations?

How can a small community unite to improve its high school's climate and have fun doing so?

For answers to these questions, read on.

SNAPSHOT #1

A STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY EMPHASIZES CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT

The eight-step school improvement process developed by the Colorado Department of Education is effective in improving the climates of schools. At least this is the opinion of two of the Denver Staff Academy's staff development specialists.

Three years Marjorie Tepper and Gary Hillman were members of a group of eight specialists from the academy who received training in the use of the process. Since then more than a dozen Denver schools have been assisted through the process, eventually forming school improvement task forces and evaluating the impact of their activities.

When asked about the effectiveness of the process, Marjorie and Gary reply simply, "It works."

"When schools go through all of the steps," they add, "their climates improve."

The process which Gary and Marjorie use consists of the following steps:

1. Raising staff awareness of the rationale for climate improvement.
2. Securing staff support for going through the process.
3. Collecting base-line data regarding the extent to which the climate is initially positive or negative.
4. Conducting a "mini-audit," an assessment of the school's climate by a visiting team of teachers and other leaders.
5. Setting priorities for school improvement.

6. Forming one task force for each priority.

7. Planning and implementing school improvement activities and projects, and

8. Evaluating impact by collecting impact data.

Marjorie and Gary, in a recent journal article[1] describe how, by applying the climate improvement process to an ailing elementary school, they succeeded in substantially improving climate and morale. The results of their one-year project are impressive.

Once priorities were agreed upon, the faculty organized two task forces--one to improve communications and another to improve the school's problem-solving, conflict resolution, and decision-making processes. Because of the closely-related nature of the task forces' work, it was decided to combine them into one larger, hopefully more-effective school improvement group.

Eventually, one-third of the faculty became directly involved in the activities of the task force. Many of the activities were school-wide staff development activities designed to help improve communications, activities with which the academy could directly assist.

Base-line data, gathered prior to the mini-audit, had revealed that staff members' feelings about the school had initially been highly negative. One year later, however, the staff responded much more positively to the instrument. The school's leaders could announce with confidence that the climate of the school had been substantially improved.

What happened to achievement? Not much. Basically, achievement remained stable. During the two years following the mini-audit, however,

[1]Hillman, Gary L., and Tepper, Marjorie, "Add School Spice: Fire Up Your Staff's School Spirit," The Executive Educator, January, 1984, pp. 16-17.

the school's population has changed drastically. The mobility rate, for example, during the 1982-83 school year was 67.2 percent, with a high percentage of pupils from middle income families being replaced by pupils from lower-income or poverty level families. There is reason to suspect that, had the climate project not taken place, achievement might well have declined.

Gary and Marjorie have the following suggestions for anyone launching a project similar to theirs:

1. Remember that improving morale requires time, energy, and involvement by the entire staff,

2. Don't be discouraged if everyone isn't enthusiastic about the project initially. Support will grow as constructive activities are initiated,

3. Allow autonomy for the task forces but insist that they plan their work and share their plans with the staff, and

4. Collect base-line and bench-mark data so that you can show that the project had a positive impact.

"The surest sign of improvement," according to Marjorie and Gary, "was that staff members not only arranged to maintain the improved climate, they also requested that we provide them with a variety of instructional changes."

For more information about this project, contact Gary or Marjorie at:

The Denver Staff Academy
Denver School District #1
900 Grant Street
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 837-1000

REFERENCES

[1]Hillman, Gary L., & Tepper, Marjorie, "Add School Spice: Fire Up Your Staff's School Spirit," The Executive Educator, January, 1984.

SNAPSHOT #2

AN INNER CITY SCHOOL TAKES ITS CLIMATE SERIOUSLY

How do you build excellence and quality and high expectations into an inner-city school which serves low-income, traditionally low-achieving pupils? Kiyo Yamada, principal of Colorado Spring's Helen Hunt Elementary School knows how to do it.

Over the past six years he and his staff have demonstrated that an inner-city school can be a high quality school--a place in which pupil and staff morale is high, attitudes positive, and learning valued and emphasized.

Kiyo doesn't like to talk about the problems which faced him and his staff six years ago. The school, however, was in trouble. Achievement was extremely low; the school ranked last in the district in reading. Vandalism was high, and discipline problems were severe.

Kiyo learned about the school climate concept gradually as he implemented a variety of school improvement projects and activities.

"I have not always placed school climate improvement on as high a priority as I now do," he reports. "In the past I viewed climate improvement activities as somewhat cosmetic and synthetic in nature. I felt that it emphasized extrinsic rewards rather than intrinsic motivation."

Today, however, Kiyo views the climate concept more broadly. He sees climate improvement as, "promoting an all-prevading attitude within the school community that provides encouragement when encouragement is needed and recognition when recognition is due."

Kiyo sees learning as an "exciting process" and he believes that the quality of teaching and learning is more likely to reflect this excitement in "an atmosphere of support, trust, encouragement, and optimism."

Each of the past six years Kiyo and his staff have launched from six to eight major school improvement projects or activities.

Staff involvement in the school improvement effort has been high; the changes have been substantive. Building-based, faculty planned, staff development has been central to all of their efforts. Examples of projects:

1. An on-going project to improve students' reading and writing skills emphasizing the writing process of revision.

2. A school climate mini-audit to define climate improvement priorities

3. Climate improvement projects to improve communications, to increase staff and student involvement in planning and decision-making, to improve student's self image and to generate more positive mental attitudes. Examples:
   - Formation of a student council
   - Organizing "classroom councils" for leadership development and teaching problem solving and critical thinking
   - Expanding the rewards system (e.g., a "positive letters home" program)
   - Use of the Weehauken Individualized Language Arts Project materials to individualize instruction

4. Definition of five quality determinants as "basic characteristics of a good school"

5. Systematic instruction in critical thinking and problem-solving

6. Emphasis throughout the school in "Communicative Expression" (e.g., most pupils are involved in at least one performance annually.)

7. Continued emphasis on multi-cultural awareness and appreciation.

At the end of Kiyo's fourth year as principal he was able to report that, "for all practical purposes, we have achieved national norms in reading."

In fact, a longitudinal study of reading scores, as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, had shown that median percentile scores had tripled in grade 2 and more than doubled in grade 6, as follows:

ITBS Median Percentile Scores	Grade Two	Grade Six
10/78	18	26
10/79	33	50
10/80	33	30
10/81	46	40
10/82	56	52*
10/83		63*

*Same group of students

Similar gains have been documented for other grade levels. Other positive results include:

- Substantial reductions in vandalism and discipline problems (e.g., Playground fights were reduced by 90 percent).

- Improved parental attitudes towards the school. (e.g. After two years, parent-initiated requests for appointments for parent-teacher conferences increased by 64 percent), and

- The number of student retentions (non-promotions) has declined by 50 percent.

Kiyo, his faculty, and the children are proud of their school. Morale, pride, and cohesiveness are high; the climate is positive.

When asked whether or not he would do the whole thing again, Kiyo smiles and says, "Well, it wasn't easy. During the early years I asked myself from time to time why I was here. Had I known what was involved--the hard work, the frustration, the disappointments--I might not have come."

"We have, however, succeeded," he adds. "We've built a school that we can be proud of. And that's what matters."

For more information: Contact: Mr. Kiyo Yamata, Principal
Helen Hunt School
917 E. Moreno Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80903
(303) 635-6160

SNAPSHOT #3

GETTING ZAPPED IN SHOW LOW

Climate Improvement Through Positive Reinforcement

Superintendent Tom Neel is proud of his Show Low, Arizona school district. The district has, Tom believes, one of the most positive climates in the country, "both in terms of weather and in terms of people."

"Show Low," says Tom, "is warm and sunny and small. I can put my whole administrative staff in the front seat of a pick-up truck. The climate was positive before I came here three years ago, but it's even more positive now."

What made the difference?

Tom can describe a number of projects which he and his staff have launched. They are proud of their elementary school's "Pride in Excellence" program, a systematic way of rewarding pupils for a wide variety of different types of achievement and accomplishments.

"Kids are learning that excellence is achievable," says Tom.

Show Low is also proud of its computerized learning programs. Tom's comment: "Kids are learning how to learn and how to master the technology," and

People all over town are getting ZAPPED.

"Show Low", says Tom, "is one of the few places is the world where being zapped is a positive experience. We like to catch people doing things right."

Being ZAPPED in Show Low means that someone is on the high school faculty's "Positive Posse" has identified you for having done something

extremely well for yourself, others, or the school.

If your nomination is approved by the posse, you become eligible for a "positive consequence" and some public recognition.

IZAPP, the name of the program, stands for "IN ZEALOUS APPRECIATION OF POSITIVE PERFORMANCE." According to Monte Harris, Show Low's high school principal, and his posse members, the program "stresses the positive reinforcement of the whole student, realizing that young people need encouragement physically and emotionally, as well as intellectually."

"In essence," says Monte, "they need to feel good about themselves."

The Show Low IZAPP posse has video-taped several of the assemblies at which awards have been made. They are unusual, to say the least. Some of the characters, played by posse members:

> GARY WILLIAMS, the detective. It is his job to seek out people in the audience who are "guilty of positive performance." Once identified, the persons recognized are brought to the stage, their accomplishments are cermoniously described, and they are awarded a "positive consequence."
>
> JIM CRAIG, who sometimes wears a King Kong suit.
>
> KATHY JOHNSON, the Polynesian dancer, and her friend,
>
> WANDA ROSANIA, who favors her own versions of Oriental dancing. Then there's
>
> DAN IRELAND, the far-out D.J.

They make the awards; then they put on a show.

Consequences may be in the form of food, theater tickets, school activity passes, or gift certificates. According to the posse members, "You are limited only by your creativity."

Show Low's business community has become very generous about donatir consequences to the posse, especially since some prominent business people and the Chamber of Commerce have been ZAPPED.

The Show Low Posse has the following advice for people who might like to start a similar program:

1. Choose your posse members carefully. You will want a diversity of talent and an ample supply of creativity. According to the Show Low posse, "The more creative the posse, the more creative the program." It also helps if one or two posse members are a little crazy.

2. Determine yearly consequences for the outstanding students to be given at the final IZAPP assembly. These consequences should be more costly than the monthly or daily consequences. Yearly goals should be determined at the beginning of the school year and announced to the students.

3. Determine the monthly or term consequences and hold IZAPP assemblies. The assemblies, according to Show Low's posse, will "generate the energy in the program."

4. Determine weekly or bi-weekly positive consequences. These consequences, awarded between assemblies, keep the IZAPP program fresh in people's minds. Consequences are not expensive or elaborate, but they are given frequently. Faculty members may be ZAPPED by getting what is called, "The Red Carpet Treatment," a special recognition, with appropriate fanfare, in a faculty meeting or in the faculty lounge.

5. Determine workable daily consequences which feed into the over-all IZAPP program. These consequences, as described by the Show Low posse, can be given by any teacher. The posse helps other teachers implement positive daily programs by organizing "prearranged award systems" which are readily available.

To assist others in developing an IZAPP program, the Show Low posse has developed an implementation kit. The kit, about the size of a

suitcase, contains all of the information, sample materials, assembly plans, music, and assorted pieces of reality needed to start a program.

For more information about the program or the kit, contact:

IZAPP
IN ZEALOUS APPRECIATION OF POSITIVE PERFORMANCE
R. R. 3, Box 5976
Show Low, AZ 85901

What are the benefits of IZAPP?

Obviously, such a program does not easily lend itself to formal evaluation. It may or may not foster higher achievement.

The Show Low posse, however, feels strongly that the program will contribute to a positive school climate by opening communications among the staff, students, and community leaders.

"It's fun and a little crazy," says Monte, "but it makes a point. It tells people that doing positive things right is valued by the school. The program helps the school make its values clear to everyone."

A final word of advice from the posse:

"Take it easy and enjoy the program. It's supposed to be fun. Remember, IZAPP rewards positive behavior and attitudes. If the planning and implementation becomes burdensome, stressful, or uncomfortable, you are defeating the purpose. Back off and relax; slow down and take a breather. We are releasing, not building pressures."

CHAPTER VII

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CASE STUDIES

by
Eugene R. Howard

COMMON THREADS

The case studies illustrate a wide diversity of approaches to climate improvement. Each set of leaders proceeded in his or her own way, responding uniquely to whatever circumstances prevailed.

Perhaps the first and most important lesson we can learn from the leaders we have studied is that there is no single approach to climate improvement.

Yet there are some common threads running through all of the projects.

1. Involvement

The administrators in the case study schools were all experts at involving others in the change process, yet they did not abdicate. Mary Lou Zarlengo at Sunset Ridge and Lavar Sorensen at South High School, for example, were very much in charge of their schools. They guided, however, rather than directed. Lots of people were given a chance to develop feelings of pride and ownership in the improvements. The management team and the task forces organizationally replaced, or at least supplemented, top-down governance structures.

2. Staff Development

An obvious common thread of commitment to staff development runs through all of the case studies. In the successful schools the change process was generously fueled by professional growth. Staff development, however, was not pursued as an end in itself. It was conceptually and organizationally linked to specific school improvement efforts. At El Camino School, for example, teachers went through extensive training to learn how to apply Montessori ideas in their own classes. They learned how to do something, and then they did it. Likewise, in the Helen Hunt School and in both Pennsylvania schools, active learning was for the staffs as well as for the students.

3. Measuring Impact

Another common characteristic of the case study schools is that they measured and frequently reported the impact of their efforts. Kiyo Yamada, for example, was able to say at the end of his fourth year as principal of the Helen Hunt School that, "for all practical purposes we have achieved national norms in reading." John Prieskorn in San Lorenzo was able to report that his district's high school pupils were performing at the 96th percentile in writing. Both Pennsylvania middle schools could report significant reductions in symptoms of alienation.

Success motivates.

People need to be shown that their efforts to improve the school are paying off. Faculties and parents need positive reinforcement just as pupils do.

4. Positive Enthusiasm--Charisma

A common thread of excitement and positive enthusiasm runs clearly through all of the projects. The improvement process is viewed as work, but as rewarding work. The Show Low, Arizona faculty, for example, have fun while seeking out people to be ZAPPED. Teachers at Sunset Ridge stay overtime to serve on school improvement task forces, and parents drop competing activities to help make the school better. And teachers in Lompoc voluntarily sign up for rigorous Montessori Training.

The Show Low posse, Monte Harris, Mary Lou Zarlengo, and Hank Gallina know that charisma is contagious.

Leadership consists, at least in part, of sharing optimism, of raising expectations, of counteracting feelings of powerlessness with opportunities to be influential.

5. Missions and Goals

All of the successful projects reported have been built around clearly-articulated missions or goals. People were helped to understand and accept a common set of values and a common vision of what their school could be.

In Salt Lake's South High School, for example, the unifying concept was that of a just school--a school which exemplified the American ethic. At El Camino it was the ideals of Maria Montessori and a commitment to meet the needs of pupils whose first language was not English. At Helen Hunt it was a combination of high expectations and a belief in the worthiness of academic learning.

In all cases, leaders were able to unify people because they, the leaders, represented values which could be understood and accepted.

COMMON STEPS

The leaders of the case study schools, each in his or her own way, shared a common process. Not everyone followed exactly the same steps in the same chronological order, but there are some similarities of process.

1. Formation of a Management Team

Making significant changes in a school is a lot of work; the principal can't do the job alone. The principal, then needs to organize the leadership of the school so that the improvement projects, once launched, will have adequate administrative support.

Mary Lou Zarlengo's management team, for example, consists of herself and her task force leaders. With such an organizational structure each member of the team has specific responsibility for a major improvement priority. At South High School Lavar Sorensen's management team consisted of himself and the two co-directors of the project. At San Lorenzo Valley John Prieskorn organized a district level management team.

There was recognition by virtually all of the leaders studied that the leadership function must be shared, at least during an extended period of systematic change.

2. Collecting Base-line Data

Most of the leaders recognized during the early stages of their projects that the impact of their efforts could not be measured unless

base-line data were collected prior to making major interventions.

Richard Dumaresq and Ross Blust in Pennsylvania did an especially proficient job of this. So did Kiyo Yamada at the Helen Hunt School. Kiyo, for example, was able to describe in some detail the extent to which parents began to participate in school-sponsored activities as the climate of the school improved.

Many leaders found the CFK Ltd. School Climate Profile[1] (Part A) of value as an instrument for measuring the extent to which climate was perceived to be positive or negative prior to intervening.

Almost everyone measured achievement so that gains in subsequent years could be noted. Several leaders also measured various symptoms of alientation such as discipline referrals, absenteeism, drop-outs, and the percentage of pupils earning very low or very high grades.

3. Raising Staff's, Students' and Parents' Level of Awareness

Climate improvement is a process which will affect almost everyone. It is important, then, that prior to launching any substantial projects, school leaders inform members of the school community about the project. Staff members, students, and parents need to know what climate is, why it is an important quality determinant, and how the management team intends to manage the process. They need to know that the project has district support and that the end result is likely to benefit everyone.

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[1]Published by Phi Delta Kappa in School Climate Improvement: A Challenge to the School Administrator, by Robert Fox, et al. Order from CADRE Publications, College of Education, 600 South College, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK 74104

Most of the leaders organized a series of awareness-raising meetings with staff, students, and parents, prior to launching major interventions. Hank Gallina and Kiyo Yamada, for example, combined awareness-raising with staff development. Mary Lou Zarlengo combined it with informal needs and strengths assessment.

All agree on the importance of getting staff, student, and parent support for the concept.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) has published a staff development kit[2] which contains materials which can be used both for awareness-raising and assessment. Other materials are available from CADRE.

4. Assessing and Prioritizing

Several of the leaders mentioned that they had used the CFK Ltd. Profile (Parts B, C, and D) for climate assessment. That instrument, available from CADRE Publications, will clearly measure the perceptions of faculty members, older students, and parent leaders regarding eighteen climate determinants. Based on the outcomes of an assessment using this instrument, priority determinants can be identified.

The ASCD staff development kit, mentioned earlier, also contains assessment instruments with complete instructions for their use. A pamphlet in the kit provides detailed directions regarding how to manage a priority-setting workshop.

Several of the case study schools used the visitation team "mini-audit" for assessment. This process has the advantage of being quick,

[2]Howard, Eugene R., Improving School Climate: A Staff Development Kit, ASCD, 225 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314 ($95 for members/ $125 for nonmembers)

non-threatening, and highly personal. The assessment is completed by a team of trained visitors in one day. The information from the visit is summarized during the morning of the second day, and priorities for climate improvement are identified during a workshop on the afternoon of the second day.[3]

The Pennsylvania project, El Camino School in Lompoc, and South High School in Salt Lake used the CFK Ltd. Profile. The Helen Hunt School and Sunset Ridge used the visitation mini-audit.

All assessments resulted in the identification of priorities and the organization of task forces to launch improvement activities related to the priorities.

5. Task Force Formation and Management

All of the case study schools used task forces in one form or another as a means of involving substantial numbers of people in the management of school improvement projects.

Mary Lou Zarlengo works with eight such groups, the largest number operating in any of the schools studied. In the Pennsylvania project task forces were seen as a key organizational unit in their well-defined organizational development process. School leaders who implement Denver's climate improvement model, including the one described in Chapter VI, are expected to form task forces.

Task forces are not committees. Committees are groups of people organized to study a problem or issue and to recommend action. They think up things for other people to do.

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[3]For more information regarding this process contact Eugene R. Howard, %CADRE, 1125 Moline St., Aurora, CO 80010.

A task force is a planning, working, and learning group. It is an action group which has accepted an assignment to assume the responsibility for planning and implementing a set of school improvement activities related to an agreed-upon priority.

A task force is the basic organizational unit within the school for both school improvement and professional growth.

For more information regarding how task forces function, see Appendix B.

6. Summative Evaluation

Some of the case study schools did a better job than others regarding summative evaluation.

The two Pennsylvania schools, of course, benefitted considerably from outside assistance in collecting baseline, benchmark and summative information. The San Lorenzo Valley schools, Sunset Ridge, and El Camino have been able to document substantial improvements in achievement. The Helen Hunt School documents improvements in alienation symptoms as well.

In today's world it is no longer adequate, if it ever was, to report that pupils, faculty, and parents are pleased with the results of a school improvement project. A positive impact must be documented.

We have now had enough experience with the school climate concept to be able to assure educational leaders that climate improvement will be accompanied by improved achievement and documentable reductions in symptoms of alienation. School leaders can predict with confidence that such positive changes will take place if the steps in the process we have just described are followed.

AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Figure 1 shows an organizational structure for managing the school climate improvement process within an individual school. Variations of this structure operated in most of the case study schools.

A unique feature of this structure is the dual membership of each task force leader. Each leader is a member of his or her task force and also a member of the school's management team.

A FINAL COMMENT

This book has focused on the experiences of the following educational leaders:

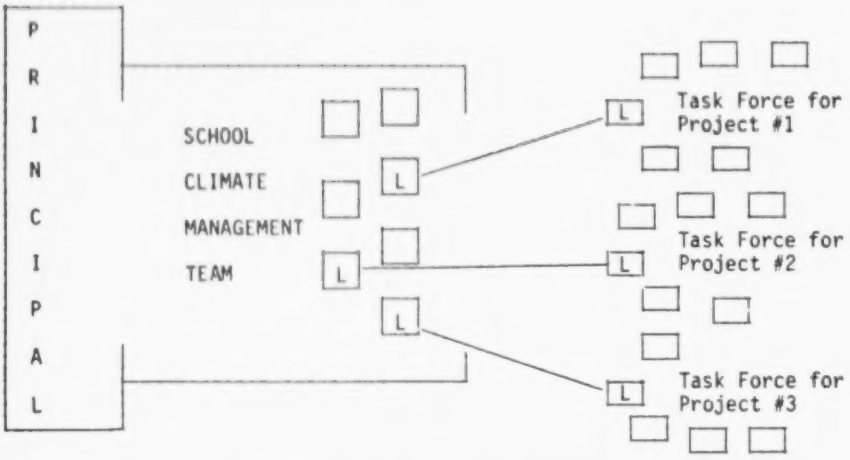
> Hank Gallina, who set out to develop one good school and ended up influencing a dozen,
>
> Mary Lou Zarlengo, who gave everyone a chance to be influential,
>
> Ross Blust and Richard Dumaresq, who, with two middle school principals, demonstrated that climate affects achievement and symptoms of alienation,
>
> John Prieskorn, who inspired a whole school district towards excellence,
>
> Lavar Sorensen, who showed us how a common set of beliefs and values can build pride and cohesiveness.
>
> Gary Hillman and Marjorie Tepper, who built climate improvement into a district's staff development program.
>
> Kiyo Yamada, who showed us that climate can be a basic ingredient of quality in an inner city school and,

Tom Neel, Monte Harris, and the IZAPP Posse, who demonstrated how a whole town can learn beliefs and values and have fun doing it.

These individuals and their colleagues are extraordinary people. They saw a need and an opportunity and they acted. They have shown us that a rational improvement process can be manageable, that people are inspirable, that climate is improvable, and that excellence is achievable.

Figure 1

Organizational Plan For School Climate Improvement



Each task force plans, administers, and evaluates one climate improvement project.

L = Task Force Leader

APPENDIX A

El Camino Elementary School Decision-Making Chart

EL CAMINO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DECISION ANALYSIS CHART

Teacher's Degree of Authority

I. I have complete authority to decide or act within limits of the Education Code, Board Policy, Bargaining Unit Contract, Social Mores and Conscience. (COMPLETE AUTHORITY)

II. I have complete authority to decide or act, but must inform (position) of my action. (ACT/INFORM)

III. I have authority to act only with prior approval of (position).

IV. I may be consulted, but decision or direction comes to me from (position). (ADMINISTRATION)

V. I will be consulted, but decision or direction comes to me from (STAFF COUNCIL, SSC or SAC).

VI. NOT LOCAL DECISION

Implementing the Degree of Authority

Columns I through VI are labeled for each decision and/or action according to the degree of authority.

1. Individual Teacher
2. El Camino Peer
3. Grade Level Group
4. Staff (certificated, administration, classified)
5. School Secretary
6. School Custodian
7. Staff Council
8. Learning Resource Specialist
9. Compensatory Ed. Coordinator
10. Title I Resource Teacher
11. Miller-Unruh Teacher
12. Speech
13. Nurse
14. Library Aide
15. Principal
16. School Site Council
17. School Advisory Council
18. Lompoc Board of Trustees
19. Office of Superintendent
20. School Psychologist
21. Music Instructor
22. Migrant Ed
23. State Department of Education
24. U. S. Office of Education

EL CAMINO DECISION CHART

A. Staff

I COMPLETE AUTHORITY	II ACT/INFORM	III PRIOR APPROVAL	IV ADMINISTRATION	V STAFF COUNCIL SSC SAC	VI NOT LOCAL DECISION	
					18	1. Decide when school should start.
			15			2. Develop yard duty schedule.
?						3. Decide to exchange recess duty with another teacher (mutual agreement).
	15					4. Add items to staff agenda.
		15				5. Have secretary duplicate materials.
		15				6. Request that another teacher cover my class.
?						7. Call substitute for my class.
?						8. Leave campus during my lunch hour.
			15			9. Assign a student to another classroom.
					19	10. Distribute materials to students from outside agencies.
	15,16					11. Communicate directly with SSC/SAC issues vital to teachers and teachers' point of view.
			15			12. Select school photographer.
?						13. Conference with parents outside the contract day.
			15			14. Select grade assignment within our school.
					18	15. Decide transfer policy, i.e. who should have to move.
					18	16. Select resource people most appropriate for this school.
			15			17. Select new teacher required for vacancy at local school.
				7		18. Decide when to have minimum days.
				7		19. Decide type of group in-service/staff development.
				7		20. Decide length of student lunch period.
				7		21. Decide time period of student lunch.
						22.
						23.
						24.
						25.

B. Program (Classroom)

I COMPLETE AUTHORITY	II ACT/INFORM	III PRIOR APPROVAL	IV ADMINISTRATION	V STAFF COUNCIL SSC SAC	VI NOT LOCAL DECISION	
1						1. Assess the appropriate level of instruction for specific student/students.
1						2. Determine the academic expectations for specific student/students.
1						3. Prescribe a program to fit the child's needs.
1						4. Decide what techniques to use to motivate students to learn.
1						5. Decide which teaching process to use to reinforce learning.
1						6. Decide which teaching process to use to promote retention of learning.
1						7. Decide what technique to use to teach transfer/ application of knowledge.
1						8. Decide the rate and degree of learning that should be attempted for each student.
1						9. Decide that specific student/students should be provided additional review in another series before advancing to a higher level of difficulty in our reading series.
	11					10. Establish size and composition of classroom reading groups.
1						11. Direct small groups to work in learning centers.
	14					12. Direct small groups of students to do research in the library.
	14					13. Decide to use the library for class group activity more than once a week.
1						14. Recommend retention for a student.
					18	15. Decide on retention of students.
1						16. Determine schedule within classroom.
1						17. Decide and implement classroom environment.
				7		18. Decide on Open House format, Back-to-School Night.
1						19. Use parent aides in my classroom.
		15				20. Take students on a field trip.
1						21. Participate with students in outdoor education.
			15			22. Decide on busing and individual cars for field trips.

I COMPLETE AUTHORITY	II ACT/INFORM	III PRIOR APPROVAL	IV ADMINISTRATION	V STAFF COUNCIL SSC SAC	VI NOT LOCAL DECISION	B. Program (Classroom)
1						23. Recommend student placement/grouping for next year's class.
1						24. Send weekly progress reports home for specific child/children.
		15				25. Send a child home to get his books/homework/instrument, etc.
1						26. Decide that my class will present a program for school.
		3				27. Schedule the time allotment for sharing textbooks within grade level.
		2				28. Arrange with another teacher to have older students assist younger students in the classroom during the instructional day.
			15			29. Change regularly scheduled lunch hour for my class.
1						30. Have a special "dress-up day" for my class.
		15				31. Arrange activity with another school, i.e. sports activity, field trip, etc.
						32.
						33.

						C. Curriculum & Evaluation
1						1. Decide and implement curriculum content and time allotment for regular school program.
		15				2. Decide not to follow the Comprehensive School Plan as established by Title I, Title VII & SIP.
		15				3. Apply for pilot programs.
					19	4. Abandon report cards in favor of parent conferences or some other reporting system.
					19	5. Set appropriate dates for giving required CTBS tests.
				16		6. Approval of SIP Program.
				16		7. Establishment of evaluation procedures for SIP.
				17		8. Approval for Title I Program.
				17		9. Establishment of evaluation procedures for Title I.
						10.
						11.

I COMPLETE AUTHORITY	II ACT/INFORM	III PRIOR APPROVAL	IV ADMINISTRATION	V STAFF COUNCIL SSC SAC	VI NOT LOCAL DECISION	D. Special Program
					23	1. Have parent sign release for child to receive psychological services.
	1,8, 11,12 13,15					2. Recommend that child should be screened for special education.
4						3. Report concern about child's home environment, i.e. cleanliness, abuse, non-supervision.
					23	4. Decide that students in my class will not participate in special education.
		15				5. Decide that students from my class will not participate in Title I/VII/MigrantEd/Resource Specialists Program/Miller-Unruh.
		10,11 22				6. Change time when students from my class would receive tutoring services from Title I, Migrant Ed., Resource Specialist, Miller-Unruh.
		21				7. Excuse students from my class for instrumental music.
	8,22 10,11					8. Excuse students from my class from Title I, Resource Specialist, Migrant Ed., Miller-Unruh (daily).
				7		9. Decide what special assemblies the school will participate in, i.e. Cinco De Mayo, Thanksgiving, Christmas.
				24		10. Decide to participate in SIP.
					25	11. Decide to participate in Title I.
					25	12. Decide to participate in Title VII.
					23	13. Decide to participate in Miller-Unruh.
					25	14. Decide to participate in Migrant Ed.
						15.
						16.

E. Student Behavior/Discipline

				7		1. Establish workable school discipline policy.
		15				2. Establish workable classroom discipline policy.
I						3. Give a pink slip to students not assigned to my class.
	15					4. Suspend student from class.
				7		5. Establish playground discipline policy.
						6.

F. Supplies & Textbooks

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	
		15				1. Borrow non-consumable materials from another school.
		15				2. Loan materials to another school.
		5				3. Ascertain supply needs for the year.
		15				4. Purchase special items for my classroom.
		15				5. Contract for a film from an outside agency when money is involved.
		15				6. Take school equipment home to prepare lesson plans.
					23	7. Decide which textbooks should be placed on State matrix.
1						8. Select adopted textbook/material most appropriate to student level.
	11					9. Decide which reading book a student will be placed in.
						10.
						11

G. Budget

		15				1. Apply for outside funding for a special project.
				7		2. Decide how money is to be distributed and transferred among non-personnel budget categories.
				17		3. Final approval of Title I budget.
				16		4. Final approval of SIP budget.
						5.
						6.
						7.

APPENDIX B

A Description of the School Climate Improvement Task Force

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT TASK FORCE

Eugene R. Howard

I. Rationale & Assumptions

A. That if large numbers of people are involved in the school improvement process, the effect on morale, commitment, and cohesiveness will be positive.

B. That the principal and a small number of leaders cannot, by themselves, do all of the work necessary to make significant improvements in schools; therefore, assistance is needed.

C. That teachers, parents, and student leaders, if given an opportunity to work for school improvement, will welcome the opportunity to do so.

D. That the willingness of staff, pupils, and parents to assume responsibility for school improvement activities will increase as positive results are demonstrated by the original task forces -- that the idea that anyone can contribute to making the school a better place is contagious.

E. That task forces organized to affect positively the determinants of climate (active learning, support and structure, communications, decision-making, etc.) are more likely to have a significant and lasting impact on a school's climate than are task forces focused on symptoms or problems. (Although the task force structure can be used for improving symptoms and solving problems.)

F. That making a significant impact on a school's climate by affecting its determinants is a long-term, not a short-term process.

II. Definition

A. A task force is a group of individuals who work together in a common effort to achieve agreed-upon objectives. It is a planning, working, and learning group, not a studying and recommending group. Unlike a committee, a task force does not think up things for other people to do. Rather, the task force is an action group. It has accepted an assignment to assume the responsibility for planning and implementing a set of school improvement activities.

B. Task forces have been delegated the authority to complete those activities which are specified in the SCIC's charge statement (see sample in Appendix A) and in the task force's action plan (see sample in Appendix B).

C. The task force idea was developed by business and industry as a means of assembling the best available talent in an organization and focusing that talent on unusually complex projects. As in business and industry, task force membership is drawn from any or all organizational units.

D. Short-term task forces may address specific problems, solve those problems, and then disband, thereby making a limited impact on school climate.

E. Task forces focusing on climate determinants, because of the complex, technical nature of their tasks, usually are long-term, remaining operational for from 2-4 years. The membership and objectives of such task forces tend to change from year to year. The overall focus, however, remains constant.

III. Organization

A. The task force leader, usually chosen by the task force membership is assigned the following responsibilities:

1. To facilitate the task force's planning so that specific action plans related to the task force's improvement objectives are developed.

2. To serve as the task force's representative on the school climate improvement committee (SCIC).

3. To present the original action plan to the SCIC for approval and to present changes to the plan to SCIC as they are proposed by task force members.

4. To provide periodic progress reports to the SCIC, to the faculty, and to other groups regarding the task force's accomplishments.

5. To expedite the implementation of the task force's action plan by encouraging each task force member to complete his or her assigned duties in an efficient manner. Also, to monitor the action plan's time line so that planned activities occur on schedule.

6. To encourage the professional growth of task force members by recommending appropriate reading, discussing school improvement ideas with the group, and by arranging for visits to projects in other schools with similar objectives.

7. To encourage the expansion of the task force's action plan as task force members grow in their ability to distinguish between less significant and more significant improvement.

8. Task force leaders are responsible to the SCIC for the effectiveness of their work.

B. Each task force member has the responsibility for at least one activity listed in the action plan. (No free rides; everyone works) Some task force members also have responsibility for the achievement of objectives (one planning sheet). (See Appendix B.)

C. The task force will have an established meeting time and place. Members will agree initially to schedule other responsibilities around the task force meeting time so that task force meetings will be well attended. A member who must be absent will contact the leader before the meeting to provide the leader with the necessary progress report. The absent member also contacts the leader after the meeting for a briefing regarding what happened.

D. The task force's organizational relationship with the SCIC is shown in the diagram in Appendix C.

E. Initially, the task force is small--4-6 members. Later, as the task force assumes new duties, the membership is expanded.

F. As a task force grows in size and complexity, sub-groups related to specific objectives may be formed.

G. Initially, the task force is staffed by volunteers. No one should be arbitrarily assigned to a group.

H. Once the original group has been formed, additional members may be invited to join the group. Members are chosen on the basis of their ability to contribute to the group's objectives, regardless of whether those persons are teachers, non-teaching staff members, pupils, or parents.

I. Some task forces may be sponsored by the parents' association or by the student council. Most task forces, however, will probably be sponsored by the faculty.

J. Whenever possible task forces are provided with a small budget to cover the costs of travel of their members to other schools to view promising projects and to cover the cost of establishing a modest professional library related to the task force's objectives.

IV. Evaluation

A. Each task force is responsible for conducting three kinds of evaluations:

1. Evaluation of the impact of the task force's work in relation to the task forces objectives,

2. Evaluation of the processes whereby the task force makes its decisions, solves its problems, develops its plans, and manages its work, and

3. Evaluation designed to improve the effectiveness of each of the task force's projects at each stage of its development (formative evaluation).

B. Impact evaluation is formal and usually statistical.

C. Process evaluation and formative evaluation may be informal and non-statistical. Process and formative information is developed primarily for the task force's own use. Such information is helpful to the task force as it makes decisions regarding its own effectiveness.

D. Most task forces will require outside consultant assistance in designing their evaluation procedures. Such assistance is available in some schools or school districts and from most universities. (If consultant assistance is not available, the evaluation expectations of the task force should be minimal.)

APPENDIX C

Sample Charge Statement to a New Task Force

SAMPLE CHARGE STATEMENT TO A NEW TASK FORCE

The _____ Task Force is charged with accomplishing the following:

1. To study the recommendations for school improvement which have been made by various sub-groups in the climate assessment workshop and to develop objectives and activities consistent with those recommendations.

2. To study and discuss other promising approaches for influencing positively the determinant to be impacted and to develop objectives and activities related to those approaches. (significance)

3. To agree on an over-all improvement plan related to the determinant to be impacted.

4. To seek approval of the improvement plan by the SCIC.

5. Following approval of the plan, to implement it with due consideration for specific task assignments and target dates.

6. To foster professional growth and development among all task force participants so that the group's impact on climate will be progressively enhanced.

7. To report the progress of the task force to the SCIC, the faculty, parents, students, the superintendent's office, and the Board of Education.

8. To recruit new talent into the task force as such talent is needed to achieve newly-defined objectives.

9. To replace non-functioning members as necessary.

10. To evaluate the impact of the task force's work in relation to the task force's objectives, and to report this impact information to the SCIC and other interested groups and individuals.

11. To evaluate the effectiveness of the processes whereby the task force makes its decisions, solves its problems, develops its plans, and manages its work. To improve the effectiveness of the task force by modifying its procedures in accordance with such evaluations.

12. To periodically evaluate the effectiveness of each of the task force's school improvement projects so that the effectiveness of each project can be improved at each stage of its development (formative evaluation).

APPENDIX D

Sample Plan of Work - Task Force
Task Force on Teacher Advisement

SAMPLE PLAN OF WORK - TASK FORCE

TASK FORCE ON TEACHER ADVISEMENT

OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PUPILS AND PROVIDE EACH PUPIL WITH FACULTY SUPPORT IN PERSONAL PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING.

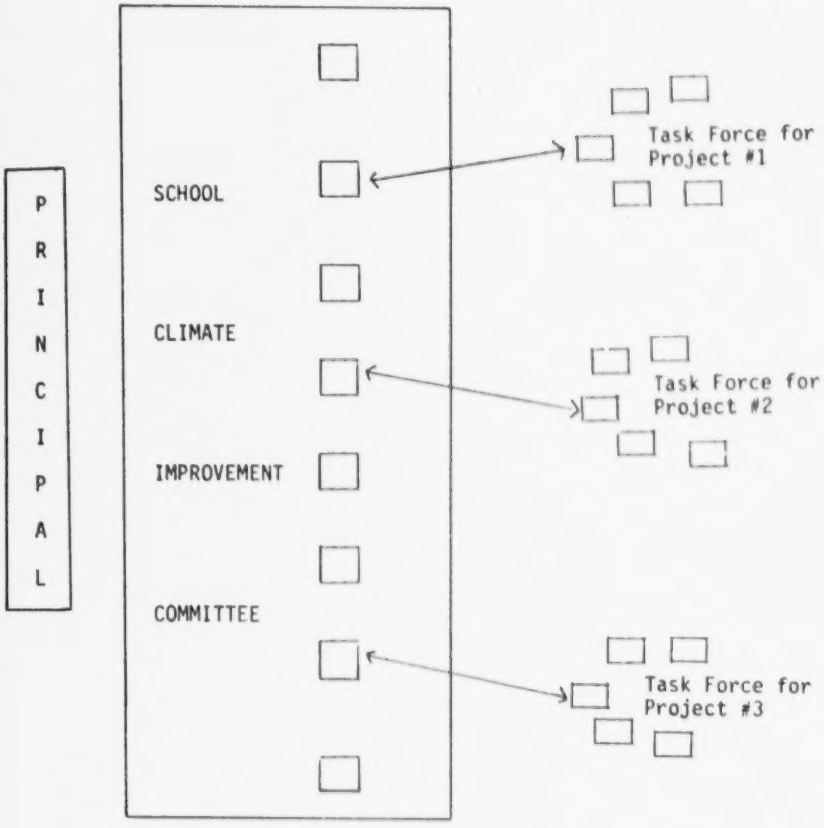
RESPONSIBILITY: JIM HANSON ASSISTED BY: MARIE DAVIS, JO ANN BROWN BILL BUCKNER, HAROLD JENSEN

ACTIVITIES	TARGET DATE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. PROVIDE TASK FORCE MEMBERS WITH INFORMATION REGARDING SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS.	ON-GOING	JIM
2. ORGANIZE VISITATIONS TO OTHER SCHOOLS	SEPT. 20 OCT. 15 NOV. 15	BILL
3. DESIGN PILOT PROJECT FOR JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL	DEC. 1	HAROLD AND TOTAL TASK FORCE
4. DESIGN EVALUATION PLAN FOR PILOT PROJECT	DEC. 1	JO ANN
5. PLAN AND CONDUCT IN-SERVICE FOR PILOT PROJECT ADVISORS.	OCT. 15 NOV. 15 DEC. 5 AND ON-GOING	MARIE
6. KEEP FACULTY, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS INFORMED OF PROJECTS	ON-GOING	JIM AND MARIE

APPENDIX E

Organizational Plan for School Climate Improvement

Organizational Plan for School Climate Improvement



Each task force plans, administers, and evaluates one climate improvement project.

Collegial
Association for the
Development and
Renewal of
Educators